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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"I have three kids. I'm a big believer in education as a means to improved the country and community."

- Terence Sullivan

See story page 11

ON THE COVER

Newington High School senior Kaila Lozada, 17, plans to attend the University of Hartford in the fall, where she will further her soccer career.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
See story page 8

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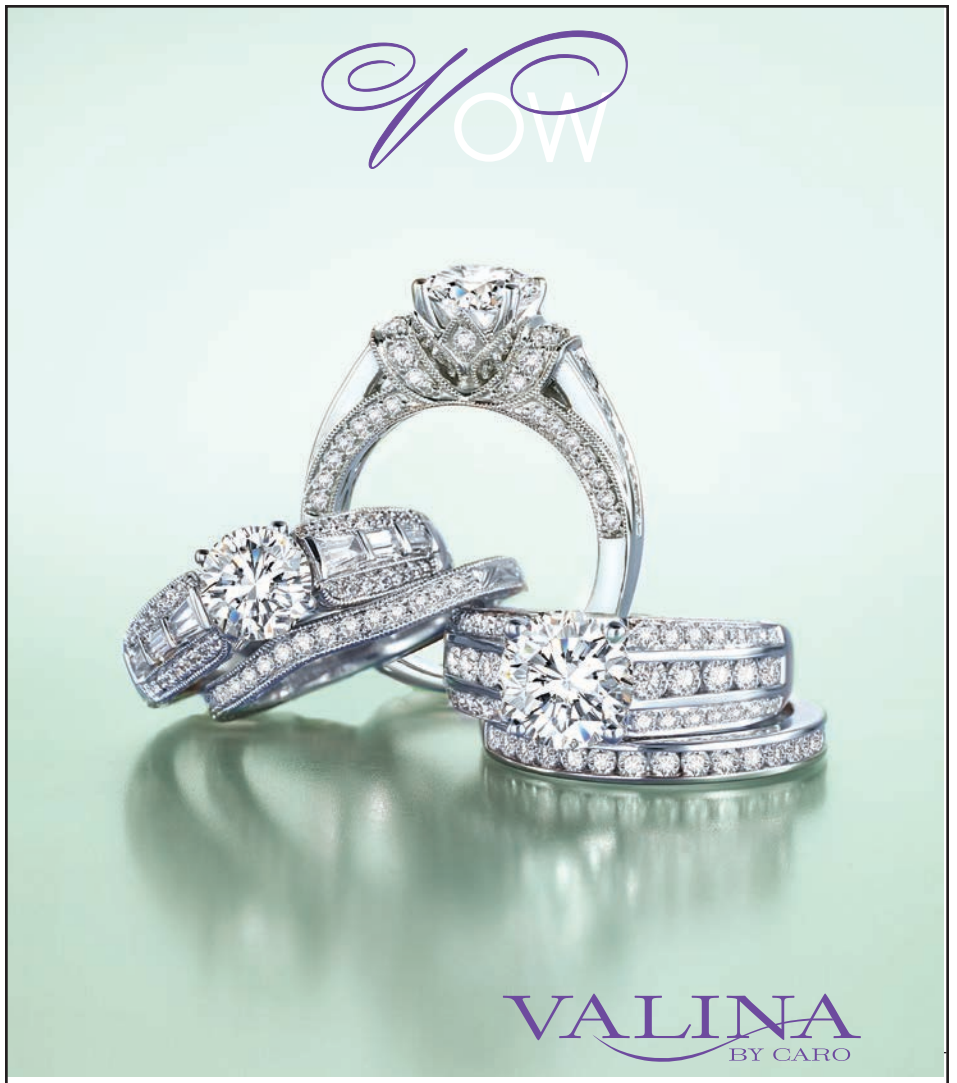

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photo by Sean Fowler

The members of the band 1974 are, from left, Mike Forgette, Adam Clymer, Parker Hu, Gary Dionne and Tim Moore.

An eclectic band

Musical group named 1974 is about to release a new album

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Their day jobs range from high school math teacher to graphic designer, but when the members of the band 1974 get together at drummer Tim Moore's Newington home, it's all about the music.

The band currently is comprised of Mike Forgette, a Newington High School grad who now lives in Shelton, guitar/vocals; Gary Dionne of Agawam, Massachusetts, bass/vocals; Parker Hu of New Milford, keyboard/vocals; Adam Clymer of Southington, guitar; and Moore, a Newington native, who also does vocals.

"After I got out of college [at the University of New Hampshire], I had moved back in with my father who lived in Newington and was working part-time jobs to pay back loans. I ran into Tim, who went to Newington High School, and said, 'I want to make music again.' We started getting together on weekends and playing together," Forgette said.

"At the time, we asked Gary if he wouldn't mind playing bass," he added. "We were just a couple of guys on the weekends just doing the music we like to do."

The band had its beginnings over the winter of 2007-2008. Several of the members have played together in other musical groups.

"[Mike] and I were in another band. It gained a little bit of traction, but the band was terrible. I thought I'd like to get back into music," Moore said.

"Even with some people coming and going, we've learned to work really well together."

– Mike Forgette

"It all pretty much came together pretty quickly. There were four of us; [other] members come and go. Within two years, we hooked up with Adam. The rest is pretty much history."

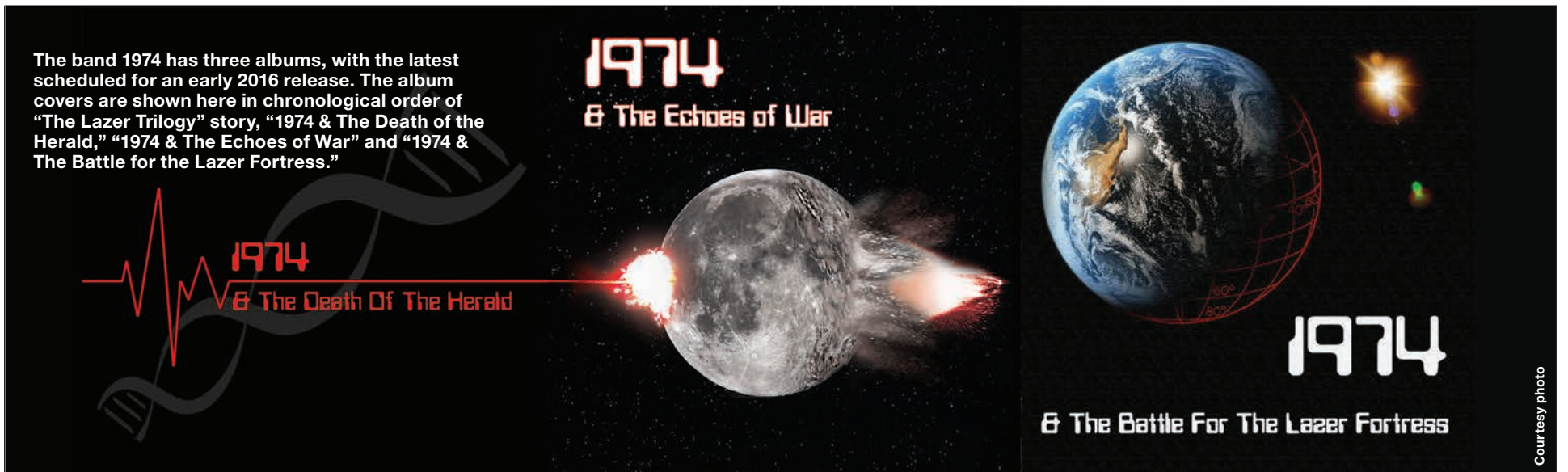
Hu is the group's newest member, having joined this past January.

"I had seen 1974 play in 2013 at Café Nine [in New Haven]. I'm in another band and we were sharing the same bills. Basically, they blew me away. Since the Connecticut scene is pretty small, we'd run into each other," she said.

"Toward the end of last December, Adam sent me a Facebook message asking if I'd be interested in auditioning for the keyboard/singer position. Then I joined these great dudes," Hu added.

"Before I joined the band, one of the things I liked so much about you guys on stage was I can tell you have this relationship and rapport. I can tell you're all friends. You're having a good time."

The group formed close ties.



The band 1974 has three albums, with the latest scheduled for an early 2016 release. The album covers are shown here in chronological order of "The Lazer Trilogy" story, "1974 & The Death of the Herald," "1974 & The Echoes of War" and "1974 & The Battle for the Lazer Fortress."

Courtesy photo

"What speaks volumes is we're all family. We'll have a big pasta dinner. We were all Forgie's groomsmen. If the band ever went away, we'd still be here drinking coffee," Clymer said.

"We do the music for us. It's a total bonus that other people got into it. We're so appreciative of that. We are unbelievable grateful. We really play music for the five of us. We have the greatest fans in the whole wide world."

That doesn't mean that their marathon rehearsal sessions, usually held on the weekends, always run smoothly. Each member brings a strong point of view.

"Adam and I talk about the band all the time when we're hanging out. We said big egos make bad music," Hu said.

"One of the things that's really great about you guys is you do disagree – I used to write songs, too – but there's a higher goal and everyone is working toward it."

Forgette said the band has evolved like a long-term relationship.

"When we first started, we were so excited about everything we were doing. Then there was this middle part [of] now that we had earned some sort of exposure, now what are we going to do? We were bickering a little bit.

"Should we focus on touring? Should we focus on writing? Should we focus on practicing moves in the show? We were tearing ourselves in a bunch of different directions," he said.

"We're five differently intense people. Even with some people coming and going, we've learned to work really well together."

That includes a give-and-take process when it comes to writing.

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At the Outer Space in Hamden on Sept. 6, 2015, are 1974 band members, from left, Tim Moore, Mike Forgette and Adam Clymer.

Photo by Angela Rose Vartuli/Photography by ANROVA

"We'll say, 'Let's try it; let's hear it back.' Gary is songwriter in a band. I'm a songwriter. Adam is a songwriter. It used to be tough, now it's a very comfortable process," Forgette said.

"If I write something and bring it to the band, it's going to be better than if I just held on to it myself."

They are currently finalizing their third album. While they rehearse in a studio in Moore's basement, they are recording the album at Sonic Environments in Bloomfield, where they also did their second album, engineered, mixed and mastered by Jeff Weed.

The album is called "1974 & The Echoes of War" and it's part of a trilogy. The previous two were "1974 & The Battle for the Lazer Fortress" and "1974 & the Death of the Herald."

"All of our full-lengths are tied to a concept or story. It started in 2009 when we started to write 'Lazer Fortress.' We started creating a crazy concept album," Forgette said.

That album features a number of musical styles.

"There's an acoustic tune, a more mellow groovy tune, a more mellow '80s rock, a 16-minute instrumental rock. It was very ambitious. It took us two years without any sort of deadline. It was just an album we liked," he said.

"We had full conversation at practices [about] why does this happen in the story. In order to justify everything that happens, we created a huge back story, just to justify the story on the album which people probably don't even care about.

"The back story is really cool; we should do an album [about that]. We thought about doing a double album, but we did the prequel in 2013. Now we're in the middle of a trilogy."

Which, Dionne noted, "of course, we wrote out of order."

Their sound is hard to classify.

"There's a very theatrical quality to it. We try to make all the songs run into each other. There are very intense parts. It's very grandiose musically.

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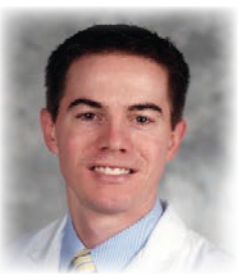
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It gets put under progressive rock, but it could be put under musicals," Forgette said.

Dionne called it sci-fi rock operas.

Clymer said there is a similar quality to The Who's "Tommy" or Pink Floyd's "The Wall."

"That's the idea, to have a story, to have a song reflect what's going on in the story, to have an upbeat song when something good is going on. That's why we tend to get the progressive banner put on it. There's almost a Broadway musical quality to it. We did it instead of Gershwin," he said.

Clymer said the music reflects their diverse musical tastes.

"Punk rock, Yes, house music, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones. It's going to get very melting pot. Our band is the Ellis Island of music."

The group has been meeting with success, winning several Connecticut Music Awards over the past four years, including best new band, best rock band and best overall band.

"On the Connecticut music scene we're all kind of friends with each other. When you think of rock bands in Connecticut, I have a feeling when people see our shows, [they think] that's what a rock band should look like," Forgette mused.

That doesn't mean the band has always been good.

"The first performances we had were fairly awful. We wrote music like you wrote it and were never going to touch it again," Forgette said.

Clymer agreed. "We were really good at being real bad in the beginning. We defined terrible," he said.

They're not sure about when – or if – they'll be touring in 2016.

"We're in a place of indecision about that. In 2014 we tried to play as many shows as possible. We played any gigs we could find and we got kind of got burned out," Dionne said.

"At this point, we stopped playing gigs and decided to focus on album writing and playing more select gigs and making sure it was something worthwhile. In the last six months, we've just been focusing on the album. I guess we'll sit down and discuss what we're going to do next."

While it's challenging to find time to play gigs with jobs and families, one thing on the table is a European tour.

"We have talked about Europe. We have a lot of international fans. We have far more international fans than local or regional," Clymer said.

Those fans find them on bandcamp.com.

"I'd say almost weekly or biweekly, there's always someone from London or Italy or Sweden. They're just actively searching for music," Forgette said.

"There's a band called 1974 AD from Nepal. We've probably snagged a couple of fans accidentally from them."

That begs the question of how they came up with the band's name,

"We were playing for a few months and didn't have a band name. I put out there that it sounds like we're playing '70s rock music and someone popped out with a date, 1974, and that's the awkward date we chose," said Moore.

"I love the name," Clymer said. "It's rock and roll for the sake of rock and roll. You just don't hear it this way anymore."

"It's very original music that you never heard before and you will never hear again," Moore said.

"It's progressive rock with the craziest dudes I know," Hu said. **NL**

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Scoring
on the field and court
Kaila Lozada is a two-sport star at Newington High School

by Mark Jahne
Editor

When Kaila Lozada is on the soccer field, other teams take notice. That's because she is always a threat to score, and often does. Kaila, 17, a senior at Newington High School, is likely one of the best soccer players ever to wear the NHS uniform. She's also a member of the girls basketball team.

Kaila Lozada is being called the best female soccer player in the school's history.

Photo by Lisa Brisson

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Kaila and her teammates, Kayla LaRosa and Mackenzie Luiz, earned all-state recognition this season for their soccer prowess. The forward has played soccer all four years of high school and was selected a team captain.

She first took up the game in kindergarten.

"She's the only girl's soccer player [from NHS] to earn all-state in multiple years, the first ever all-New England girl's soccer player," said Director of Athletics and Student Activities Christopher Meyers, adding that Kaila consistently rose to the occasion in the team's biggest games.

Meyers said Kaila is the leading scorer in the long history of NHS girls soccer. She also excels in the classroom and is a member of the National, English, Science and Spanish honor societies.

She was named an academic all-conference player all four years as well as a soccer all-conference player for her entire high school career.

Kaila will showcase her skills at the next level when she moves on to the University of Hartford after graduation.

"She's a quiet, unassuming kid who is a very good soccer player."

– Adam Wilkinson

"I like the competition and meeting new people," she said. "I've always worked hard to become the player I am today."

Kaila admitted that she was nervous when she first joined the team as a freshman.

She plays point guard on the basketball court and is a captain of that team, too.

Though the two sports may be different, Meyers said they complement each other.

"Our higher-level athletes do play multiple sports," he said.

Girls soccer coach Adam Wilkinson is another strong Lozada booster.

"She was a sophomore when I arrived; an outstanding athlete. She's probably the best player who came through the school and the statistics back that up," he said.

He called her a role model and someone who does not flaunt her ego. She was the top goal scorer, but didn't brag about that.

"She's certainly helped the program grow. As good a player that she is, she's not pretentious about it," Wilkinson said. "She's a quiet, unassuming kid who is a very good soccer player."

Kaila's own favorite soccer players are Lionel Messi and Abby Wambach. Messi is considered one of the premier male professional players in the world and plays for Futbol Club Barcelona, as well as on the Argentine national team.

Wambach recently retired from the U.S. national team. She is a two-time Olympic gold medalist and FIFA Women's World Cup champion.

Wilkinson, who grew up in soccer-mad England and played collegiately at Central Connecticut State University, said Lozada is the kind of star who makes her teammates better. She would decline easy opportunities to score goals and pass the ball to a teammate instead so that others could also experience the thrill of driving it into the net. NL

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John Salomone resigns

Town Council and town manager go their separate ways

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Town Manager John Salomone is seen at left during the annual State of the Town breakfast sponsored by the Newington Chamber of Commerce this past year. Salomone resigned his post under pressure Jan. 7 after nearly 10 years on the job.

photo by Mark Jahne

It ended quietly, with a unanimous vote and a brief public statement by the Town Council. The nearly 10-year reign of Town Manager John Salomone is over.

Salomone resigned under pressure Jan. 7. Criticism of his performance had increased in some political and public circles over the past year. When a new Town Council was elected this past November representing a change in majority party from Democrat to Republican, the likelihood of his departure increased.

The outcome may have been sealed in December when it was publicly revealed that Salomone was looking elsewhere for a new job. A special Town Council meeting was convened Jan. 7 and, after going into executive session for several minutes, the council returned to immediately cast a vote to accept Salomone's resignation.

The roll call vote was 8-0; James Marocchini, a Democrat, was absent. The council then named Town Clerk Tanya Lane to serve as acting town manager for the next 90 days. Salomone was not present at the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Maureen Klett read a brief written statement indicating that Salomone had resigned to pursue other career opportunities and wishing him well.

"The council thanks Mr. Salomone for his service," it read in part.

When Mayor Roy Zartarian asked if there was anything any member of the council wished to say regarding this matter, there was complete silence.

"All I can say is John Salomone has left the town of Newington to pursue other professional opportunities."
– Mayor Roy Zartarian

Salomone was hired in 2006 by former mayor Rodney Mortensen. Like all town managers, he experienced his share of political storms, but the prior Democrat majority on the council maintained its support.

One of those Democrats, former deputy mayor Clarke Castelle, decided not to run for another term. He spoke out during a public comment opportunity prior to the executive session and eventual vote.

He said Salomone earned many commendations from the council for his work on such issues as Cedar Mountain open space, storm aftermath, labor contract negotiations and acquiring a grant to raze the decrepit National Welding factory on Cedar Street.

"We are talking about a good and decent man, looked up to by his peers and his staff," Castelle said.

A small number of other residents also spoke. Some told the council that they believe it did what needed to be done, while other praised the selection of Lane as interim manager. One pointed out that Lane is taking on the additional job just as budget season and union negotiations are scheduled to begin.

Castelle opined further in an email to Newington LIFE.

"I'm afraid that as a result of this insidious maneuver, a large number of residents, and most of John's staff at town hall, will be grieving for a long time to come," he said. "They will miss the presence of a very good and capable man, one who had a big heart and an even bigger soul."

Zartarian opted not to expand upon the reasons for Salomone's departure, referring back to the statement that was read at the council meeting.

"All I can say is John Salomone has left the town of Newington to pursue other professional opportunities," the mayor said.

With regard to whether or not more town staff will be replaced, Zartarian noted that the Town Council only has direct control over one town employee: the town manager.

He did say that the council hopes to make a decision soon on whether to offer the town manager's job to Lane or conduct a search to find a replacement. If she is offered the position, a new town clerk would need to be hired.

Salomone did not return a telephone call from Newington LIFE seeking comment. **NL**

Fifty years and a million dollars

Newington Student Assistance Fund celebrates a pair of milestones

by Mark Jahne
Editor

It started in 1966 with the goal of granting interest-free loans to residents pursuing post-secondary education or training. Almost 50 years later, the Newington Student Assistance Fund has given out more than 1,000 interest-free tuition loans totaling more than $1 million.

NSAF is a non-profit organization originally organized by the Newington Jaycees as well as PTA and civic representatives. Its financial assistance is awarded on the basis of the needs and relative merits of applicants without regard to race, sex, creed or national origin.

Loan applications are available on the NSAF website. Applications are also available in the high school counseling office, Lucy Robbins Welles Library and local branch of TD Bank. Completed applications must be submitted to the high school counseling office no later than the first Friday in June.

Terence Sullivan, president of the board of directors and a 10-year member of the organization, said it is planning a celebratory block party next September to coincide with the annual Waterfall Festival. NSAF is also hoping to hold a wine and craft beer tasting event in April as part of its golden anniversary.

He noted that all of the funds given out by the organization are donated by local residents and businesses. The money is carefully invested to maximize its strength.

An annual mailing is conducted to solicit donations and the community has always been supportive.

"They've been very generous. When the recession hit in '07 and '08 we did notice a steep decline in donations," Sullivan said.

The numbers have increased each year since then, but are not yet back to 2006 levels, he added. In spite of that, all qualified applicants have received some level of financial assistance.

"We haven't turned anyone away," said Jeri Lynn Turkowitz, vice president and head of publicity. "We also give a couple of scholarships a year."

Each year, NSAF presents the Cammy O'Connor Book Awards at Newington High School Awards Night to a member of each class.

"I have three kids. I'm a big believer in education as a means to improve this country and community."

– Terence Sullivan

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photo by Mark Jahne

Terence Sullivan and Jeri Lynn Turkowitz are president and vice president, respectively, of the Newington Student Assistance Fund.

In addition, a pair of scholarships are awarded each May, one to a male and one to a female, based on criteria established by the board of directors, with emphasis on school and community service, along with academic achievement.

The amount of each scholarship is $750. Loan applications are not utilized for scholarship selection. The teenagers are grateful for the support.

"The letters that we've received from students over the years have been really nice," Turkowitz said.

She said an average of 45 to 50 loans are granted annually. The maximum amount per year is $1,000 and applicants can apply year after year if desired. Students attending two-year colleges, four-year colleges and technical/trade schools are all eligible to apply.

"You must be a Newington resident," Sullivan said. "The money that's used to fund the school awards was donated to us many years ago by Indian Hill Country Club."

The directors of the Indian Hill Scholarship Foundation transferred $27,000 to NSAF in 1994 with instructions that it administer these funds and create an annual scholarship to be awarded to a local student or students.

The money flows in a continuous cycle because when students pay NSAF back, it loans that money out again. Recipients pay their loans off on a monthly basis following graduation or termination of studies.

"I have three kids. I'm a big believer in education as a means to improve this country and community," Sullivan said.

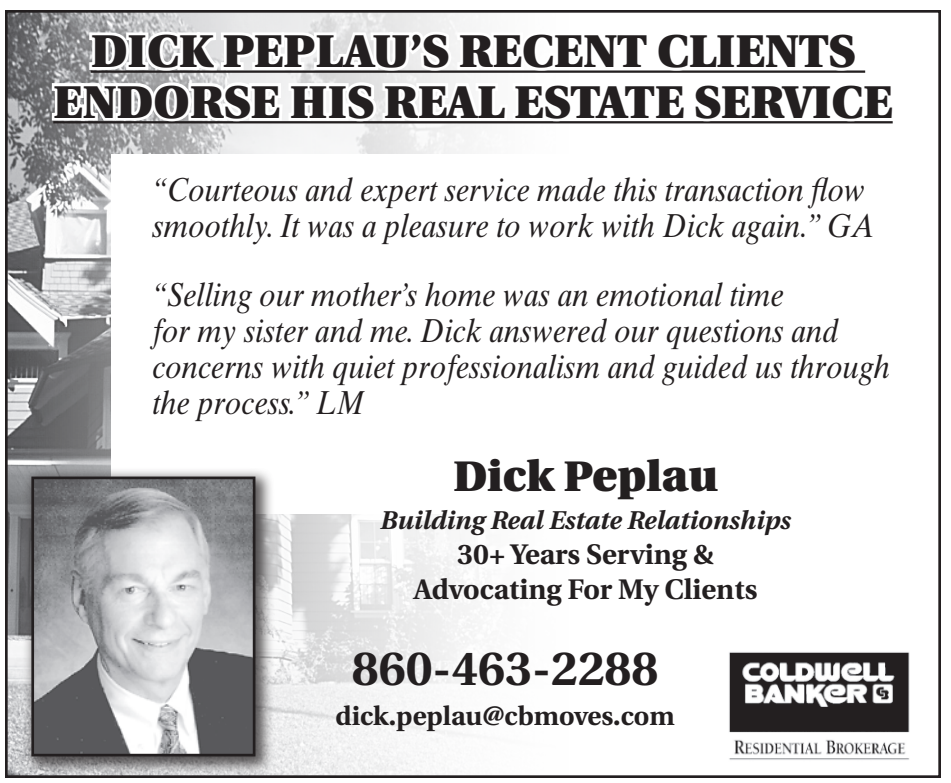
"I grew up in Newington and went through the Newington schools," Turkowitz added. "I know how expensive it is to pursue higher education."

She gets satisfaction knowing that fellow residents benefit from the organization with which she is affiliated.

NSAF recently elected leaders for the 2015-2016 program year. In addition to Sullivan and Turkowitz, the other officers are Secretary Caroline Rothberg, Treasurer Maura Stamm, Loan Officer Christine Apruzese and Immediate Past President Donald Logie Jr.

The other members of its board of directors are Phyllis DiCara, Anna Eddy, Pamela Golchin, Dan Henry, Alisa Houldcroft, Pamela House, John Kelly, Stan Mach, Carol Miller-Pekrul, Janet Nahorney, Robert Newbold, Dina Petillo, Robert Randich, Robert Stubbs, Robert Wardrop and Sabrina Lavieri (Newington High School advisor). NL

To learn more about the Newington Student Assistance Fund visit nsafinfo.org.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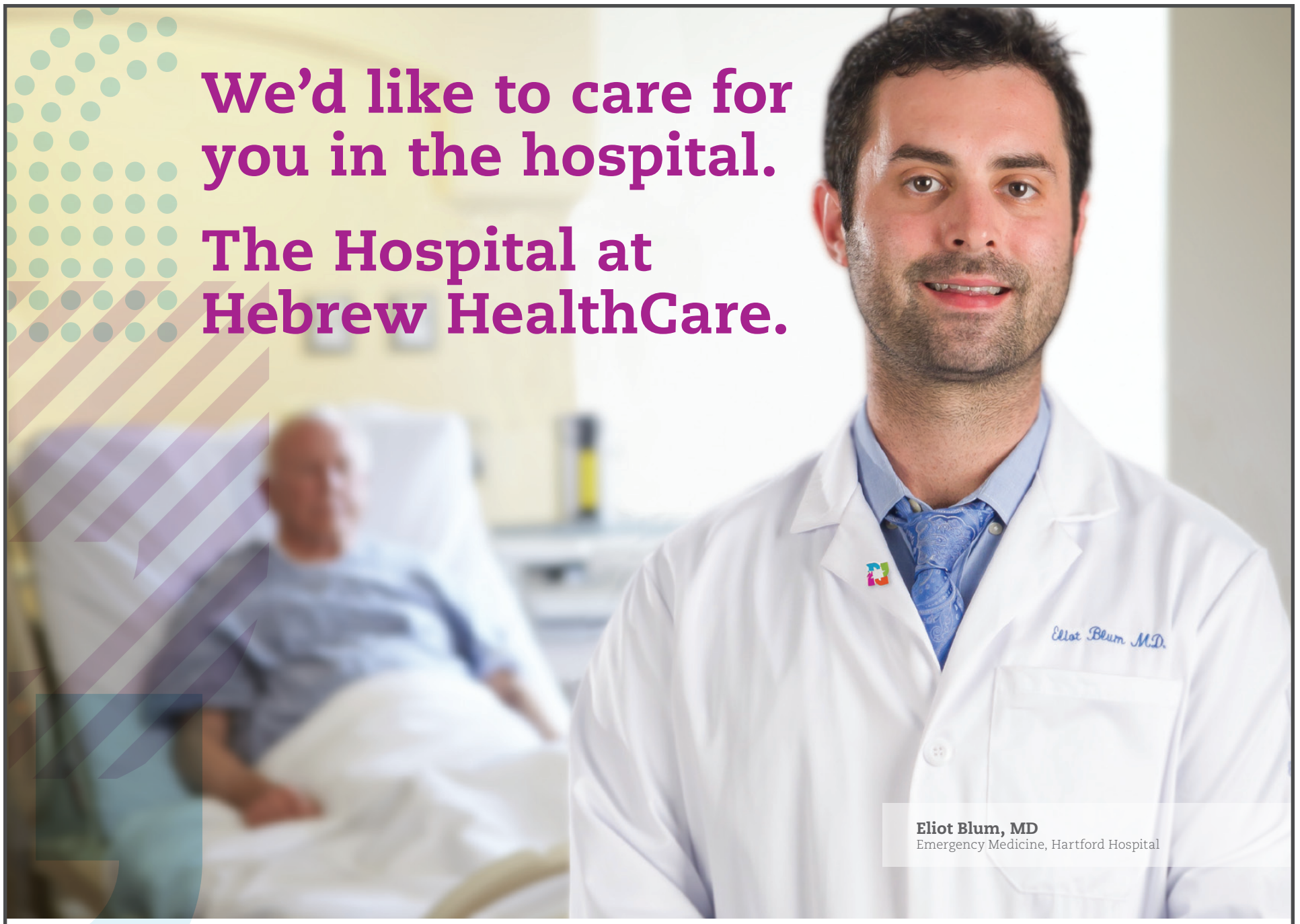

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Rotary welcomes Santa Claus to breakfast

The Newington Rotary Club hosted its annual Breakfast with Santa just before the holiday. Rotarians cooked and served up a wide assortment of breakfast food while the jolly old man greeted families in attendance at the club's annual fundraiser.

Dave Johnson was chairman of the event. Children had the opportunity to participate in craft-making activities assisted by volunteers, including students from Newington High School.

Clockwise from top left:

Rotarians Dan Granucci, left, and Dr. Doug MacGilpin tended to the cooking.

Seven-month-old Hayden Karter of Newington gets to sit on Santa's lap.

First grade classmates Olivia Deprey and Xander Scruggs color Christmas trees at the crafts table.

Juliana Teles of Newington and her daughters Goevanna and Marianna attended the breakfast.

photos courtesy of Dave Tedeschi

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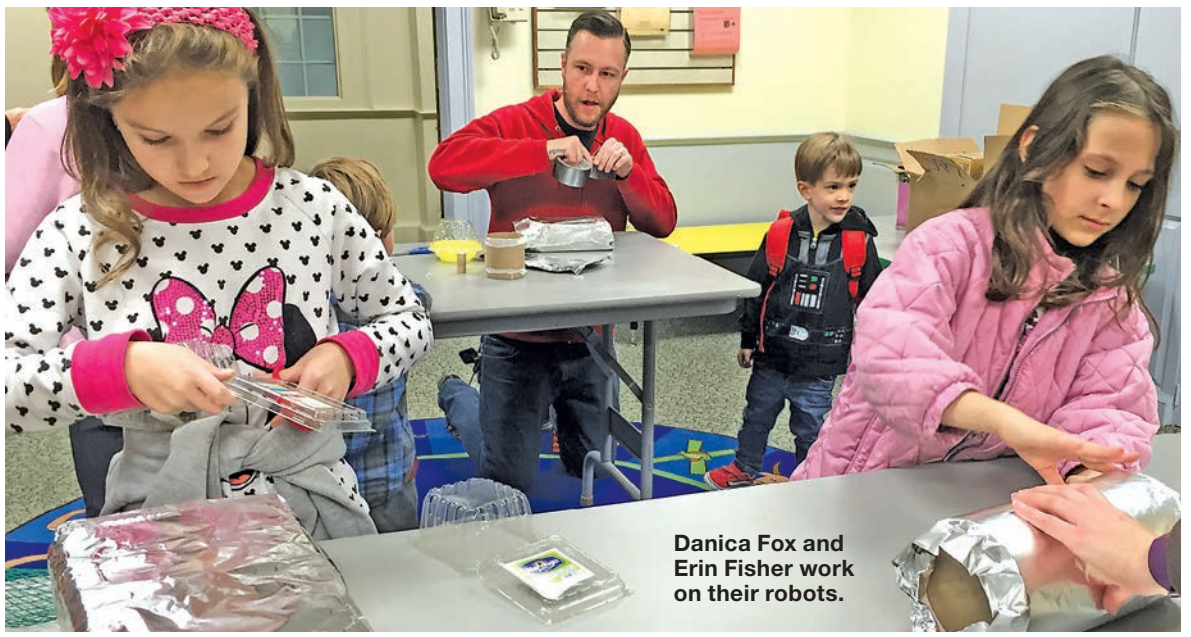
Library throws a party

Children's Services at the Lucy Robbins Welles Library presented a "Fantastical Hatke" event to celebrate Ben Hatke, author of "Zita the Spacegirl." He visited with third- and fourth-graders at local schools thanks to the Adella S. and John M. Sliva Memorial Fund. Hatke later came to the library for a book signing.



Danica Fox and Erin Fisher work on their robots.

One of the attractions was a Robot Laboratory. Here is one of the creations.

Courtesy photos

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Fernando Rosa, whose term as chairman of the Newington Economic Development Commission recently ended, welcomes local business people to a "Meet the Town Officials Business Network" event at the Portuguese Club of Hartford.

photo by Mark Jahne

Promoting businesses new and old

The town's Economic Development Commission believes that it is important to bridge the gap between local government and business. That's why it held its second annual "Meet the Town Officials Business Network" event at the Portuguese Club of Hartford the evening of Dec. 3.

Mayor Roy Zartarian, Town Manager John Salomone and several department heads were on hand to speak with business owners and managers. Also well represented were elected officials and the Newington Chamber of Commerce.

Several members of the EDC were present, as well as Town Planner Craig Minor and Economic Development Director Andrew Brecher. Businesses that have been in town for 25 years or longer were recognized, as well as those that opened here during 2015.

Data Mail was honored as the 2015 business of the year.

According to a list provided by the EDC, businesses that have been in town for 25 years or more are: A.J. Bafundo, A.J. Tool, A-1 Chrome & Polishing, AAA Appliance Repair, Abrahms Insurance, Accurate Threaded Products, Action Audio, Addamo Manufacturing, Advance Plumbing & Heating, Advanced Computer Engineering, Advanced Pest Control, Advanced Vending, Aerospace Balancing, AKR Associates, All Seasons Landscaping, Alliance Graphics, Allied Machining, Allstate Insurance, Almost Home Child Care, Al's Landscaping & Nursery, American Glass and American Radio Relay League.

Also, Amerodental, Aqua Backflow/Gallicchio Plumbing, Ashton-Baldwin Agency, Auto Specialties, Automotive Restyling, B&B Overhead Door, B&B Tool, B&D Automotive, B&N Aerospace, Bachand Contracting, Balf/Tilcon, Bedding Barn, Bel-Air Manor, Bongiovanni Group, Bowl-O-Rama, Buckley Associates, C&A Distributors, C&A Machine, C&C Automotive, Cambridge Management/J.H. Scelza, Campbell Cooling & Heating, Carvel, Ceda Company, Central Connecticut Sales & Manufacturing, Century 21/ Stamm-Eddy Real Estate, His and Hers Hairstyling, Hi-Tech Polishing, Hoffman's Gun Center, Hudson Seating & Mobility and Jefferson House.

Others include, Jeffrey Rajotte DDS, Jensen Machine, Joe's Foreign Car Repair, K&R Grinding, KMR Landscaping, Keeney Manufacturing, Koziura Insurance Agency, Lord Edward's Grooming Room, M&M Group Benefits/Mauro Agency, M&P Pipe Jacking, M. Frank Higgins, Marchion & Faucher, McBride Carpet, McLain Electric, Mike's Auto Service, Ming Palace, Miniature Nut & Screw, Mirabelli Automotive, MKM Importers, Modern Barber Shop, Modern Tire, Mortensen Insurance, Mortensen's Ice Cream, Muir Envelope, N&B Manufacturing, Nassau Griffith & Kelly and National Tool & Cam.

Also recognized for 25 years were Newington Bicycle Shop, Newington Diagnostic Center, Newington Electric, Newington Family Dentistry, Newington Gun Exchange, Newington Meat Center, Newington Pediatrics/ProHealth Physicians, Newington Pizza, Newington Veterinary Clinic, Nino's Import Auto Service, Northern Windustrial, Nowak Products, Office Furniture Inc. OFI, Old Towne Coin, Olympia Diner, Pane Enterprises, Patz Driving School, Paul Leckowicz DMD, Paul Welding, Perley Gagnon Electric and Premier Cleaners.

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There were 44 new businesses that opened in town in 2015. They are: A-1 Insurance Unlimited, All State Insurance – Anthony Savio, Allstate Insurance – Mohamed Ouda, Artisan Vapors, Atlantic Law Book, Autozone Northeast Inc., Caribbean Food Concepts, Core Barre Pilates Studio, DEFX Fitness, Direct Buy, Dorothy Williams, Fun Quest Inc., Gammie Air Monitoring LLC and Green Meadow Dental.

Also, Green Monster Recycling LLC, Hair by Monika, John M. Glover Agency, KC's Gold & Collectibles, Mah Associates LLC, Misterscapes LLC, Moe's Southwest Grill, Mojo Hair Salon, Mojo Solar Studio, Neighborhood Table Top Shop, New England Auto Transport & Towing LLC, Newington Dance Center, Newington Pet Spa and Newington Rapid Recovery Rehab Center, OnFire Grill, RMS Residential Mortgage Services, Roaming Homes LLC, Rooster Company, Sacred Self LLC, Salon Cassidy, Scarlett's Lash Boutique & Spa, Strandz Salon, Studio 525, TJ's on Cedar, Travel by Fara LLC, Trippo Novelty LLC, Two Cousins Remodeling & Repair LLC and Yelena's Nail Creations. **NL**

Collins seeks almost a 6 percent increase

Submits proposed school budget for Board of Education review

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Courtesy photo

Superintendent of Schools William Collins

Superintendent of Schools William Collins is asking the Board of Education to consider a 2016-2017 budget of $74 million, a 5.99 percent increase over current spending.

The board has been reviewing the budget since it was first presented Jan. 6 and the schedule calls for it to adopt a final plan for submission to the Town Council by March 8. The combined school/government revenue and spending plans will make up the overall municipal budget for the next fiscal year that begins July 1.

"I presented a budget that was higher than normal. The board felt very strongly about moving forward with a couple of initiatives," Collins said. "I know it's a high number."

Those initiatives include new social studies textbooks, high-priority maintenance items, grade 7 Spanish as part of the core curriculum and a high school Advanced Placement course in computer science principles.

The Spanish initiative alone requires the hiring of four additional teachers. Students who take this new grade 7 language class would receive high school credit.

"We need a medical person for the [medical science] academy at the high school. That will open next year," Collins said.

This position is unique because it requires someone who is either a physician or a nurse as well as a teacher. The new academy will feature a genomics lab, hospital bed lab and small operating room to help train students for future careers in the health care industry.

The current operating budget for public education is $69.8. That represents a 2.65 percent increase from the 2014-2015 budget. Collins solicited staff requests and proposals before crafting his 2016-2017 document, trimming more than $3 million from that before arriving at $74 million.

Cost drivers include contractual salary increases (2.06 percent), benefits and insurance (2.84 percent), curriculum, technology, maintenance and other contractual obligations.

Sixty-three percent of the proposal consist of salaries for teachers, principals and other school district employees. Another 18 percent covers their benefit package.

Items considered for, but eventually deleted from his budget proposal, include numerous maintenance needs, expansion of the preschool program, a German course at the high school, media center ebooks, digital arts labs at the two middle schools, middle school social workers and an instructional coach for the high school.

The capital improvement portion for the budget allocates money for STEM renovations, infrastructure upgrades and code updates at the high school.

Collins said plans are in place to refurbish the high school's culinary program and to create a Makerspace think tank. He's particularly enthusiastic about the latter.

"It's going to be the crowning jewel of the STEM program," he said.

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math.

"We know it will come down," he said of the 5.99 percent increase. "Our health number is very high, but it's dictated by the town."

The superintendent expects a more accurate number from the town's insurance agency in another month, one that should allow him to trim 1 percent or more from his budget request.

"We're also recovering from a 1 percent hole from last year," he said.

That happened when the Town Council chopped $638,000 from the board's operating budget. Money was shifted from the capital projects account to cover that shortfall, but doing so left capital projects short.

Buses, maintenance and technology were all cut in the current operating budget. So was one-to-one student-to-computer technology at the high school; it already exists in grades K-8.

"Right now, that's out of the budget," Collins said.

Newington is one of the few school districts that operates its own fleet of buses; most others contract with private firms for that service. So replacing old buses is a factor in formulating a budget.

"I put in for one. Last year they gave me one. We're supposed to do five a year," he said.

Collins remains confident that the local economy is improving. He contends that bodes well for both government and schools.

"The town is doing some good things … we're primed for a great recovery," he said. "There are a lot of good things going on."

Nancy Petronio, chairwoman of the Board of Education, is also hoping that the projected cost of health care for school employees will drop. She noted that salaries and benefits are fixed costs by contract that account for more than 4 percent of the budget increase.

"Obviously, we don't want to transmit a 5.99 percent budget to the Town Council," she said. "We're at a starting point of well over 4 percent."

She pointed out that other costs have gone up, including the high school police resource officer and tuition for Newington children who attend magnet schools. Her priority is to move the district forward by finding a way to keep the additional four language and one STEM teacher in the final budget.

"Those are the things we want the most, but they will be very difficult to move forward," Petronio said.

"Our health number is very high, but it's dictated by the town."

– Superintendent of Schools William Collins

A Citizen's Guide to the Budget produced by the superintendent's office provides background data on the school district. Enrollment has increased by 241 students over the past 20 years. Magnet schools were not even on the radar in 1995, but today 229 Newington residents attend these schools.

The number of special education students has increased by 2.4 percent over the past decade. The number of students who are determined to be economically disadvantaged has risen from 622 in 2005 to 938 today; that represents 21.7 percent of overall enrollment.

The number of students who speak a primary language other than English has gone up slightly. There are 94 urban students enrolled in Newington schools through the long-running Project Choice regional desegregation program.

As is the case in most Connecticut towns, Newington is heavily dependent upon the local property and motor vehicle taxes to fund public education. That makes up 78 percent of the total budget. The remaining money comes from state grants (19 percent) and federal grants (3 percent).

The Town Council is scheduled to adopt a final budget April 5. The council cannot adjust any line items on the Board of Education portion of the document, but it can increase or decrease the bottom line. Any such changes will be dealt with by the school board starting April 6. NL

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Business notes

Middlewoods of Newington was selected as a Caring Star of 2016 for service excellence in assisted living. In ratings and reviews from older adults and their family members, it earned a five-star consumer rating – the highest possible score – while also meeting other qualifying criteria for this national honor. There are only nine Caring Star 2016 communities in Connecticut and a total of 787 across the country.

United Methodist Homes, the parent company of Middlewoods of Newington, received a 2015 Best Practices Award for Staff Recruitment and Retention from the Connecticut Assisted Living Association. UMH was recognized for its staff in-service program, "Mission, Values, and You," which introduced and discussed the practical ways the organization's mission and issues related to the aging experience could be shared and best understood by all employees.

Hartford Federal Credit Union, with a branch on Hartford Avenue in Newington, earned the prestigious Sustained Superiority Award from BauerFinancial, Inc., an independent credit union and bank rating firm. This honor comes on the heels of HFCU earning Bauer's top 5-Star rating for 96 successive quarters.

A holiday gift drive at **Panera Bread** bakery-cafés in the Hartford region, including Newington, enabled Charities of Hope to make the holidays brighter for 50 children served by CT ALIVE. Gifts were collected for the Hartford-based organization by Panera customers and employees. **NL**

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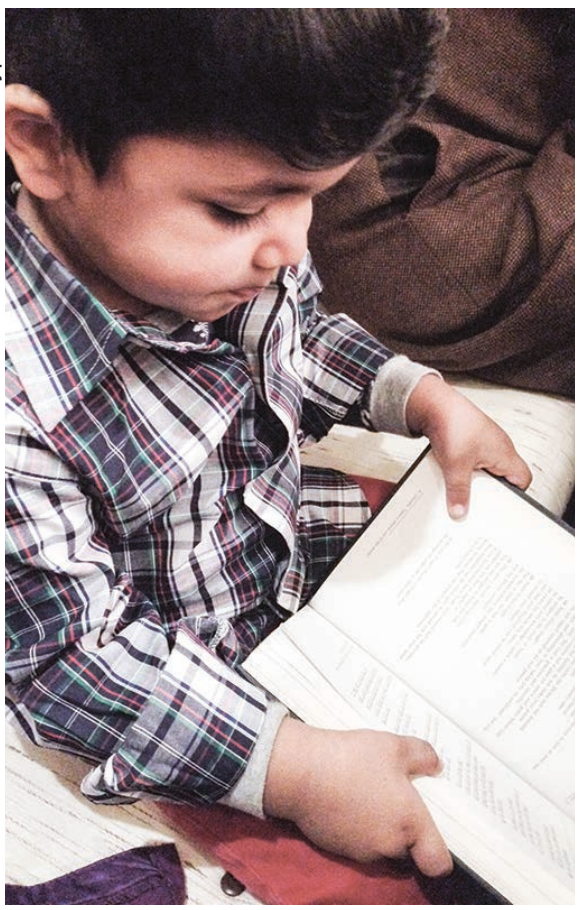

Elyas Mahir Mannan, 2 ½, follows along in the prayer book at the Dec. 18 service at Temple Beth Torah in Old Wethersfield.

'Love for all, hatred for none'

Temple Beth Torah invites Muslim community to visit synagogue

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

On one of the darkest days of the year, members of Temple Beth Torah in Old Wethersfield invited members of the Baitul Aman Mosque of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community to join them for Friday evening services welcoming the Sabbath.

The Meriden mosque was the target of a hate crime this past November when several bullets were fired into the house of worship.

Dr. Mohammed "Mahmood" Qureshi and Zahir Mannan, along with his wife, two children and parents, attended the Dec. 18 service and spoke to the congregation. They came at the invitation of Rabbi Seth Riemer of Newington, Beth Torah's spiritual leader, who has engaged with the Ahmadiyya group for a number of years and has known Mannan since he was in high school.

"I keep in close touch with these folks. They are always emailing me and phoning me and wishing me blessed holidays and I try to do the same, although I think they're better at it than I am," Riemer said.

"They're just blessed, sweet people. When the mosque was hit with bullets, I reached out to them."

His goal was two-fold.

"Partly to show support for them. It's important for them to hear from people who really validate them," Riemer said.

"I think it's important for our synagogue community that its rabbi is supportive of the Muslim community. Temple Beth Torah has been very supportive of me in my outreach."

"Rabbi Seth has been a wonderful friend for over 10 years. He joined our end service in 2004 in Wallingford and ever since we have been doing events together to create and build the bridges of brotherhood between the Ahmadiyya Muslim and the Jewish community," Qureshi said.

A physician, he is president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Connecticut Chapter.

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"Seth has spoken at many of our interfaith events and we have joined services in different synagogues. Both Jewish and Muslim faith stem from the Abrahamic roots," Qureshi said. "We have more in common than it is realized in terms of our practices and beliefs. We can build bridges of peace on highlighting the commonality."

He was a guest of U.S. Rep. Joseph Courtney at President Barack Obama's final State of the Union address.

"Islam is inherently a religion of peace. The radicals and terrorists have hijacked our religion and we have to take it back from them peacefully with our deeds and professing the message of peace that is given in the Quran by sticking to our roots," Qureshi said.

Qureshi and Mannan spoke during the service, then joined the congregation for more informal conversation afterwards.

"We have crossed paths at interfaith functions in the past, but with all the tensions surrounding Muslims in the past weeks, we felt this would be a good time to connect on a more personal basis. The group from the Ahmadiyya community was diverse, young and old, male and female. The children were well-behaved and very much into the musical aspects of our religious service," Kathi Mag said.

The Rocky Hill resident serves on the executive board of Temple Beth Torah.

"The president of the mosque, Mahmood, and a young scholar [Zahir] spoke to our congregation about their faith and our commonality, being descendants of Abraham. The Ahmadiyya are fundamentalists in that they believe that their truth lies in the literal word of the Quran and that one cannot read violence in the words of the Quran," she added.

"My personal impression, after listening to their speakers during our service and chatting with the men and women who stayed for our Oneg Shabbat [social hour] following the service, was that these are people who value family and community, who take their religion seriously, who believe as we do that there is one God and that the religions of the world are simply diverse paths to that God," Mag said.

"While the women wore hijab (head covering), they were open, educated and interested in sharing their experiences and learning more about ours. They extended an invitation to us to attend their mosque, where they offer open house three times a week," she said.

"The name of their mosque is Baitul Aman, The House of Peace – ironic, in that it was recently fired upon by a drunken, hate-spewing neighbor – a white male with a gun. I will be attending an open house there and have invited some of their congregants to join our ESL class at the Rocky Hill library."

"We have more in common than it is realized in terms of our practices and beliefs. We can build bridges of peace on highlighting the commonality."

– Dr. Mohammed "Mahmood" Qureshi

Temple Beth Torah is a small, unaffiliated, egalitarian congregation. While many members are from the immediate area, others come from as far away as West Hartford, Avon and Coventry.

"Rabbi Seth is a pioneer in establishing a loving and long-standing Jewish-Islamic relationship in Connecticut," said Mannan, who is a head teacher and administrative associate at the Early Learning Program at Central Connecticut State University as well as the press and media coordinator for the Baitul Aman Mosque.

"It was, and always will be, vital for us to come together with people of all backgrounds at a spectrum of venues, be they sacred or secular, to learn from one another about one another, furthering the cause of peace, justice and service to both our faith, fellow beings and country," he added.

"This is part of our community's mission to enact our motto 'love for all, hatred for none,' and it was not the first time. We had previously visited the synagogue, as had Rabbi Seth honored our Baitul Aman Mosque with his presence and eye-opening talks at many interfaith deliberations throughout the years.

"Rabbi graciously invited us to talk this time on a blessed Shabbat Service at Temple Beth Torah's synagogue during sacred Hanukkah about our message in response to the shootings at our mosque, a testament to his unshakeable love and support towards our community," he added.

"We were honored as Muslims to join rabbi's sacred service in his house of worship on the same day our holy Friday service unified us for prayers in our mosques."

About a dozen members of Temple Beth Torah attended the service. Members of the congregation come from a variety of Jewish backgrounds including Reform, Conservative and Orthodox.

"I think it's one more way of strengthening a sense of trust within our community. In liberal environs such as Connecticut, I think you have a strong opportunity to drive home the point that we are all friends and neighbors. We care about each other across religious lines," Riemer said.

After the service, Mannan wrote the congregation an email thanking them for their hospitality.

"We wanted to whole-heartedly thank you all, and our One God, for inviting us and giving us a voice again at your blessed Temple with love and understanding. Everybody that attended from our community not only felt comfortable, but very much at home," he wrote.

"Our President Mahmood and I shared the wonderful experience with our members with prayers of appreciation on our lips. Many of our prayers are truly indistinguishable from each other, as are the members of our communities," he added.

"We feel you all are like family to us and cannot justly express our gratefulness to have joined and participated in such a moving and special gathering at your Shabbat Shalom service. We hope to visit you again soon." **NL**

Temple Beth Torah is located at 130 Main St., Wethersfield. Call 860-529-2410 or view templebethtorahwethersfield.org. Baitul Aman House of Peace Mosque is located at 410 Main St., Meriden. Contact Zahir Mannan at 860-670-6402 or zahir.mannan@muslimyouth.org.

Rabbi Seth Riemer of Newington has a long-standing friendship with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

Dr. Mohammed "Mahmood" Qureshi is president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Connecticut Chapter. He recently spoke at Temple Beth Torah in Old Wethersfield.

Zahir Mannan spoke at Temple Beth Torah in Old Wethersfield in December. He is a long-time friend of Rabbi Seth Riemer of Newington.

Student of the month

Madeline Michaud has a passion for learning

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

photo by Allie Rivera

Third-grader Madeline Michaud stays active in sports, dance and the arts. But it is her kindness toward others and passion for learning that makes her stand out.

As Madeline Michaud, 9, walked down the halls of Ruth Chaffee School, other students smiled and waved.

"Hi Madeline," they said quietly while walking by, as she responded to each of them by name, a large smile spread across her face. For the third grade student, kindness and friendliness are an important part of the school day.

"She is polite and helpful to her classmates all around her," teacher Carrie Sipes said.

"I always like to try to help my family and friends," Madeline said.

That kindness, along with a passion for learning, have made her stand out from her peers. She was recently recognized as an outstanding student of the month at her school.

"She is so self-driven," Sipes said. "Once we put her on a path, she can organize herself and take control of her own learning."

That educational piece is not only important, but enjoyable.

"I like learning about lots of different things," Madeline said.

Math is her favorite subject because she likes solving problems.

"I like learning about how you add and subtract and multiply the numbers to get your answer," she said. "Right now, we're learning about the distributive property of multiplication and how to make it easier for ourselves to multiply."

In addition to her love of math, she enjoys reading both in and out of the classroom. In school, she practices with reading groups who, at press time, were working on a project that had them researching castles.

"We're starting to do a project where we're making a castle with everything, like the moat and all that, out of cardboard," she said. "We're going to make little people and everything."

On her own time, Madeline enjoys reading the Magic Rainbow Fairy book series. It focuses on two young girls looking to find the seven colorful fairy sisters who make up the rainbow.

"I've been reading it since the second grade," Madeline explained. "There are the seven regular books and now there are special edition books, too."

Outside of school, she plays soccer on Newington's under-9 soccer travel team, the Coyotes, and plays indoor soccer during the winter.

"I've been playing since I was 3," she said. "I like playing defense and midfield."

She loves the sport, but it is also the friendships that she has made with her teammates that keeps her playing the game.

"My favorite part would be getting to hang out with my teammates and learning the different techniques, like dribbling," she said.

Friendship was also an important part of Madeline's recent return to dancing. She took ballet when she was 3 years old for one year and this year began taking classes again in lyrical and jazz dance.

"A lot of my friends were doing dance and I remembered that I really liked doing ballet, so I wanted to keep doing different dances," she said.

She and her fellow dancers are beginning to prepare for a recital in June, where Madeline will be dancing with two different classes.

"I like that I get to practice them at home, too," she said. "We get to do lifts and different dance moves and it's fun."

Being home with family is important to Madeline, who has one younger brother, Benjamin, a first grade student at Chaffee. They often play outside on her scooter or bicycle and travel with their parents.

"We take one vacation a year up to Clay, New York, to visit my cousins," Madeline said.

In addition to that yearly trip, the family has also taken other vacations, including one to Atlantis in the Bahamas. She would love to go there again.

"There's a waterslide called the Leap of Faith and you go through a shark tank," she said excitedly. "My dad went on it, too, and I didn't scream, but my dad did."

According to Principal Beverly Lawrence, Madeline exemplifies what Ruth Chaffee School hopes to instill in all of its students.

"Our expectations are that our students are well-rounded," Lawrence said. "It's not just about the academics."

Sipes added that Madeline is worthy of recognition for her efforts, both inside the classroom and out.

"She has a natural curiosity to learn and an internal motivation to do her best," Sipes said. "She is, overall, a great kid." **NL**

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I've been accepted! Now what?

Next steps for parents and students after receiving acceptance letters

by Alison Jalbert
Assistant Editor

An envelope with a college return address appears in the mailbox, bearing good news. "Welcome to the Class of 2020!"

Receiving a letter – or letters – of acceptance is a great feeling after the rigors of filling out applications, taking standardized tests and a slew of college visits. The work isn't done though. Whether it's choosing which college to commit to or taking additional action after committing, local experts offer advice for parents and students.

Regardless if a final decision on a school has been made, the focus should be on financial aid preparation. Filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, otherwise known as FAFSA, is critical, explained Jeffrey Noll of College Planning of Connecticut in West Hartford. Some private schools also require a CSS/Financial Aid Profile along with the FAFSA.

Students should receive financial aid awards not long after getting acceptance letters. Noll said both parents and students should review the award.

"Unfortunately, a lot of folks don't know how to do that," he said. "Awards from a school can be a bit confusing [and people] don't know if they can go back to the school and ask for more money. … Most financial aid awards will come with different components against student loans, such as work study."

It is important to be realistic from a financial aid perspective about the affordability of college, Noll said. Parents have to have conversations with their students about what tuition is and isn't reasonable.

"Students are going to get student loans. The rest comes out of pocket from parents; if they don't have it, they're going to have to borrow money," he said. "UConn is approaching $25,000 to $30,000 a year if you're living in Storrs. Some of the private schools have sticker prices upwards of $65,000. … I always tell kids never just look at the state schools that are 'cheaper' – sometimes you'll pay less for a private education than you would for a state school."

Financial planning should begin as soon as possible; Noll encourages parents not to wait until financial aid forms are due to start worrying about it.

"According to the Department of Education, more than 80 percent of Americans need financial aid for college." he said.

"Awards from a school can be a bit confusing [and people] don't know if they can go back to the school and ask for more money."

– Jeffrey Noll of College Planning of CT

Looking for outside scholarships is an important undertaking. Noll recommends www.fastweb.com. Some companies offer a fee to do a scholarship search for students, but he cautions against that.

Nilvio Perez, associate director of the Office of Recruitment & Admissions at Central Connecticut State University, said students applying for financial aid or other scholarships should be aware that deadlines vary between institutions, as well as the federal government and each state.

Students should also go on secondary visits to colleges to which they have been accepted.

"Most students visit prior to applying or prior to receiving a decision. Once a student has been admitted, the thought is, 'Well, I've seen the school already,'" Perez said. "It's a great idea to visit – now you're visiting with a different purpose. Now, you're seeing if this is the best place to enroll."

He suggests speaking with financial aid officers, academic advisers, career and internship centers and current students while on campus, even if those conversations happened during the first visit.

"Now, it's more of a detailed conversation. You're comparing this particular school … to another school you've been admitted to," he said.

Larry DeJohn, Ed.D., owner and consultant at College Planning Consulting on the Hartford/West Hartford line, said students should be prepared to look at the culture and environment of a college during a second visit. They should also become more familiar with the campus and learn more about the curriculum, the cafeteria and extracurricular activities, among other things, before the official orientation.

"Go when students are in session; you really get a feel for the campus flavor," he said. "Otherwise, all colleges look the same, and there are 4,000 of them."

For students admitted to more than one institution struggling to make a choice, Perez suggests looking at the course catalog as a starting point to differentiate between programs.

"I wouldn't just exclusively look at the catalog – also look at the outcomes. How many students are graduating from the institution? How many are getting a job? How many go to graduate school? What's the ratio between professors and students? Those kinds of things will help with making a better decision," Perez said.

Students should be thinking about potential majors, DeJohn said. He said going online and studying the majors and options at a school can help narrow the list of schools.

"If possible, they should project, over four years, what courses they'd be taking for their major. If they don't have a particular [major in mind], be prepared for junior and senior year. [This means] choosing classes wisely freshman and sophomore year," he said.

"A lot of colleges have websites for new students, or social media. This builds more of a bond prior to those orientation dates that most schools have over the summer," he said. "You get to meet people with like majors and interests, people living in your residence hall and maybe your roommate. It helps with the retention of students as well, from a college perspective."

DeJohn warns against "senioritis," which often plagues high school seniors as the end of school nears.

"It's important for those who maybe haven't been as successful as others, and even those who are, to keep their grades up until June," he said. "Colleges will look at grades, especially if a student has a merit scholarship. A college does have the right to reassess that money."

"Most colleges have open houses and admitted student events or overnight programs. Take advantage of all of those opportunities to really be engaged with the institution itself. You want to make sure you pick the one that may be the best fit for you," Perez said. "Sometimes, students fall in love with what they see on a website and never step foot on campus to get a feeling of the culture."

Although this can be a stressful time for both parents and students, DeJohn said it is important to stop and enjoy the feeling and success of being accepted." **NL**

LIFE *in the classroom*

Director of Educational Technology John Salerno works with a student at John Paterson School using Google Maps to study the town.

photos by Allie Rivera

Teaching with technology

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

The recently changed Newington Public Schools logo looks slightly different than its previous depiction. The little red school house drawing that symbolizes the district has been modified to take out the classic school bell. In its place is the Wi-Fi symbol.

The switch is a reflection of the changing environment across the district, which has been working to modernize classrooms with technology. With the rollout of roughly 1,900 Chromebooks to students earlier this year completed, the biggest push now is for teachers to become Google certified.

"We're really trying to get teachers certified so they can then share their knowledge," John Salerno, director of educational technology, said.

Since its inception, Google has changed from a simple online search engine to a conglomerate that provides tools for businesses, personal use and now education. That includes Google Summits to show teachers across the country how to best utilize the programs it offers.

"At first it was just that Google Docs will replace Word and Slides will replace PowerPoint, but it goes so far beyond that," Brenda Dzwil said.

She is instructional coach at Elizabeth Green School.

"Every day there are new apps and extensions that provide us more opportunity as educators to bring more to life for our kids."

Roughly two years ago, Salerno, Dzwil and a group of about 10 other teachers attended their first Google Summit to learn about how the technology could be used in the classroom. The group then proceeded to become Google certified and since then the number of teachers within the district who have become certified has risen to 70.

The certification is a way for them to prove their proficiency in the Google tools for educational use. Being Google certified also allows teachers to join a network of fellow educators across the country who can collaborate and provide insight on new ways to utilize technology.

One step further than becoming Google certified is to become a Google trainer. This position requires educators to undergo further training in the technology and allows them to present at future summits.

Salerno, Dzwil and Educational Technology teacher Don Vallera of John Wallace Middle School are Google trainers.

"There are only 1,500 trainers in the world, so it's a big accomplishment to have three in Newington," Salerno said.

The trio has presented at Google Summits throughout the country and Salerno said that having that network of fellow teachers has been invaluable.

"Google's biggest piece is collaboration," he said. "Every time we present, we get numerous phone calls asking how we do this."

In the coming years, Salerno, Dzwil and Vallera hope to move on to the next level of certification, becoming a Google Innovator, which requires them to create tools for fellow teachers to use.

"That one is much tougher," Salerno said. "Only 50 people are

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Salerno said that summing up all that the Google programs can do is a difficult task because it encompasses so much. At its basest level, Google provides educators and schools with programs such as Docs, Sheets and Slides, which are its versions of Microsoft's Word, Excel and PowerPoint, respectively.

From there, schools have the options to use other programs to create online maps, interactive brochures, three-dimensional presentations and much more.

Salerno displayed a project that a student at John Paterson School completed about different land forms. Using a program called Google Tour Builder, the student was able to create an interactive map of the Earth that provided a journey from place to place.

Another student, a fourth-grader from John Paterson, created a Slides presentation detailing how an eyeball works that was 201 slides long.

"I haven't built a PowerPoint in my life that's 201 slides," Salerno said with a laugh.

To get this technology fully integrated into the classrooms, the district has been using the SAMR model, which stands for substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition.

"The idea is how do we get to redefinition?" Salerno said. "We call it 'Moving to the R.'"

Substitution is the idea of switching from one way of teaching to a slightly more technological way, for example, having students who previously created a paper brochure instead create one through Google. Augmenting and modifying would involve adding hyperlinks and multimedia to the project.

"It's OK to substitute sometimes, but we're really reaching for augmenting and modifying," Salerno said.

To futher demonstrate the SAMR model, he keeps a drawing that compares diving into new technology with diving into water. Substitution would be similar to going onto the water with a paddle boat, augmenting would be going slightly underwater with a snorkel, modifying was represented by a person underwater in SCUBA gear, and redefinition was a fully submerged submarine.

Use of Google technology in the classroom was made easier with the rollout of Chromebooks to 1,900 students in the district.

Dzwil said that making these changes within the classroom can be difficult for some teachers, but she is happy to see that most are trying to incorporate this technology.

"Our students are the digital natives, but our teachers, many of us, didn't really have the technology," she said. "I didn't see a computer until college."

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EDUCATION

through Google for Education, the elementary schools have set up what is called a "techspert" program, allowing some students to become tech experts.

"We have kids who are so excited about technology and are really rising to the occasion," Dzwil said.

The techspert program at the elementary level takes students from grades three and four who have applied and been accepted to the position and gives them technology enhancement courses.

"We find the best of the best and expose them to a variety of different technology," Salerno said.

Kate Wakefield is the educational technology teacher at John Paterson and also runs the school's techspert program.

"She gives you things to do that you wouldn't do in class or you wouldn't know about, and once you start, it's really fun," techspert Joe Gionfriddo, 9, said.

"The hardest part is finding time for these kids, but these kids definitely have the urge to be a part of it," Salerno added.

The techspert program is well underway at most of the elementary schools in the district, but at the middle school level it is just beginning.

"Their techspert program is really going to be about student support," he said, comparing it to the Apple Genius Bar.

In addition to the positive benefits from the use of technology in the classroom, Salerno and some of his fellow teachers said these programs, along with the use of techsperts, have helped students who are at different levels learn to the best of their ability.

"With some of these kids, reading and math may not be their greatest strengths, but when you see them with technology, they shine," Dzwil said.

"It truly has made a difference in instruction in a positive way," John Paterson third grade teacher Marina Jones said. "We can work on whatever Common Core standard we're practicing on their level. It's an adaptive way for me to differentiate."

With all of this influx of technology, some teachers said that they have heard concerns from parents that students will be spending too much time in front of a screen.

"There's a concern that that's all we're doing when it's really not," John Paterson third grade teacher Nicole Partyka said. "It's about trying to find that balance."

"We're trying to provide the students with every opportunity," Salerno said. "It's just another tool, like a pencil or a notebook, and we need to figure out ways to utilize that tool."

With the growing use of Google programs within the classroom throughout the district, teachers and administrators said they have already seen a great deal of success.

"It's been wonderful," Dzwil said. "Our kids have enjoyed it, but more than that, they've been engaged in their learning, and that's what important to us." **NL**

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- Spring 2016 Session: March 1st to April 26th
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- Spring 2016 Session: March 12th, 19th & 26th
- Class meets once a week for 3 weeks
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An emphasis on safety

Newington High School student-athletes train to both play well and avoid injury

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Carly Wanner-Hyde gets ready to spike the volleyball.

Proper training and preparation are paramount when it comes to Newington High School athletics. The goal is not only to have the best athletes on the court, field, rink, or in the pool, but to prepare them in a way that diminishes the risk of injury.

Much has evolved in terms of preparation from what was required of high school athletes 20, 30 or more years ago. Training requirements must be met in order for an athlete to be allowed to play in competition against other schools.

"High school athletics has,

Football players do weight training to help prevent injury.

courtesy photos

Cardiovascular health and endurance are important for cross-country runners.

more or less, become what college athletics was 25 years ago," said Christopher Meyers, director of athletics and student activities. "If you're going to compete, you're going to be physically prepared to do so."

Not being prepared is a risk factor for injury and that's not something he or the coaches want to face. They encourage proper exercise and training, as well as sufficient rest.

"Fatigue is one of the largest things that leads to serious injury," Meyers said. "It's not the time that you're playing, it's the prep that goes into that."

He added that the administration's primary obligation is to make its programs safe so that the participants can focus on reaching their full potential. The teenagers learn that wellness and exercise play important roles in allowing them to live long and healthy lives.

"It's also good for the social preparation," Meyers said.

Freshmen have the opportunity to work out with their older teammates and feel more a part of the group, a process of which Meyers said parents are highly understanding and supportive.

The school has a licensed personal trainer on staff to oversee their workouts. The workouts focus upon cardiovascular, strength, core and agility training.

Gone are the days when a student could play a sport for three months and then "just shut it down," as Meyers put it. Physical training is ongoing.

"The intensity has increased so much at the high school level," he said. "The level of competition has increased dramatically."

All coaches have a minimum of CPR and first aid training. They are also taught about concussion management so that athletes who have suffered such an injury are not allowed to resume competition until they are fully recovered from that head trauma.

Meyers said the recovery time can sometimes be longer for high school students than for older athletes because teenage brains are not fully developed. He emphasized that no concussion victim can return to his or her sport until that athlete is certified 100 percent symptom free.

Cognitive tests must be passed prior to a series of light and eventually regular workouts before team competition is approved. Full information relating to this policy is shared with students and parents, he said.

"You're making it safer for them to compete," Meyers said. "Every single sport goes through the process."

There is an emergency action plan in place for every sport and every member of the team has a role. While the coach tends to the injured athlete, one person calls 911, another gets supplies, another guides the ambulance to the injured person, and so on.

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This training room is used by male and female athletes at Newington High School to improve not only their strength and endurance, but to help prevent injuries.

Meyers added that some of the student-athletes also have first aid or CPR training, something which can be helpful. Because of the more violent nature of football, a physician and an ambulance are always on standby at those games.

While injuries may still occur, the school is doing everything it can to reduce their number and severity, Meyers said, adding, "It's never going to be perfectly safe."

"The big thing is the gradual return to play" following an injury, NHS Head Athletic Trainer Lemuel Figueroa said.

At first, he said parents didn't understand why he was holding seemingly health athletes out of participation, but now they do. They also have a better understanding of concussions, in large part because of educational programs and information provided by the school.

Figueroa has been the head athletic trainer at NHS for seven years. He works under contract from Select Physical Therapy, located just down the street. He earned a B.S. degree in sports medicine from Central Connecticut State University and is a licensed athletic trainer. He has seen many advances made in training and injury prevention over the years.

"When I got there, nothing was done in the preseason," he said. "We implemented a strength and conditioning program."

That required a cultural change.

"There was some apprehension when we first started," he said.

Most NHS athletes now recognize the importance of this kind of programming. Approximately 200 of them participated this past summer in a free strength and conditioning program.

Figueroa agreed with Meyers that major high school athletics today resemble college athletics from 25 years ago. Each student-athlete trains for his or her specific sport.

For example, a football player would do more heavy weightlifting than a cross-country runner. The runner would train how to pace himself or herself for mileage.

Figueroa said he has seen a dramatic decrease in injuries because of such training.

"If they want to compete at the high school level, they have to prepare in the off season." **NL**

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These students shine in the classroom

The following were named to the honor roll for the first quarter at Newington High School.

High Honors

Grade 9

Mary Ancona, Cooper Austin, Jason Boghosian, Jordan Buslewicz, Maggie Callahan, Jevin Calma, Kaitlyn Chojnicki, Abigail Coia, Michael Colagiovanni, Erika Cuevas, Autumn DeBlois, Virginia DeFrances, John DeGirolamo, John Famiglietti, Abygale Flores, Isabella Galdamez, Cyan Gonzalez, Samantha Gorski, Jillian Grande, Rebecca Hood, Kelly Iskra, Samuel Johnson, Taylor Kilduff, Eric Kozikowski, Patrick Kulac, Samantha Lentini, William Lichota, Abigail Lyons, Nicole Martula and Jenelle Miller.

Also, Abigail Mary Molloy, Yaci Moni-Rutkowski, Patrick Nguyen, Michelle Nizielski, Zachary Palanza, Ivan Taras Panchyshyn, Michael Patnode, Daniel Pestrichello, Michael Pinard, Cheyana Rose Porter-Rizza, Riley Quigley, Mohammed Rahman, Marlon Rodriguez, Kevin Russell, Jenna Scanlon, Albert Schoenborn, Mia Servidone, Ryan Sharp, Lucinda Slattery, Romeica Taylor, Rachel Thureson, Aiden Toth, Brian Turgeon, Eric Venables, Jason Yeung, Jacob Zadroga and Shihao Zhai.

Grade 10

Dominika Adamczyk, Benjamin Arora, Syed Asar, Gynno Bacaoco, Grace Bielesz, Chloe Bilodeau, Gavin Bissoni, Patrick Boucher, Jessica Buslewicz, Grace Cala, Ashley Cayo, Al Chan, Diana Coleman, Olivia Colon, Prachi Dave, Tuuyen Dinh, Kathryn Duffner, Justin Field, Alexa Freitas, Cassidy Girolamo, Caitlin Gray, Victoria Hathaway, Brendan Henriques, Lukas Houle, Tram Huynh, Sruthi Iyer, Emily Karanian, Antonia Laites and Edward Lund.

Also, David Magsayo, Kimberly Marasigan, Ryan Murphy, Khang Nguyen, Claudia Padykula, Ryan Pereira, Elizabeth Richmond, Yasmin Rincon, Monica Sadil, Carly Saindon, Rylie Shaw, Pema Sherpa, Damon Stewart, Justine Strom, Kenneth Swanson, Kiana Tan, Jasmine Tran, Mindy Tran, Skylar Voorhies, William Walsh, Julia Wnuk, Olivia Wronka, Angelina Zacharias and Kevin Zvonarek.

Grade 11

Stephanie Akosa, Andrew Alekseiko, James Ancona, Katelyn Andrews, Megan Andrews, Emily Austin, Kacey Blais, Lauren Brooks, Rei Bufi, Samantha Burnett, Abigail Buslewicz, Abigail Cabral, Jacqueline Callaghan, Patrick Callahan, Ryan Cappellucci, Austin Caracciolo, Emily Carle, Monica Chabros, Shelbin Cheriyan, Robert Ciaffaglione, Mitchell Coia, Tyler Coleman, Vinh Dau, Iryna Demyanova, Gabriella DeRiu, Gabriela Disla Suarez, Thomas Doyle, Symantha Fazzino, Jillian Forauer, Nicholas Gallicchio, Ryan Grande, Noah Hedberg, Karli Hellman and Alexandra Hernandez.

Also, Mallory Jackson, Ariya Jacob, Ayana Jacob, Arsal Jaffery, Yash Jinwala, Courtney Kamansky, Nisa Khandoker, Benjamin Labas, Katerina Lagace, Jalanie Lawrence, Kenneth Luna, Maria MacNeill, Allison Madrazo, Nicole Maldonaldo, Lindsey Mangiafico, Neve Manion, Danielle Marino, Teodora Markova, Jason Marques, Jacqueline Minor, Brianna Nedjoika, Tam Nguyen, Rebecca Nisotis, Alex Nizielski, Nathaniel Page, Anthoiny Palaia, Catherine Parafati, Alexis Pestrichello, Lauren Petrozza, Diana Pinho, Natalie Remiszewski, Jeremy Rippel, Matthew Roberts and Emily Robinson.

Also, Corinda Sanford, Abru Santhosh, Tiffany Santos, Austin Sargent, Tyler Savluk, Charlotte Shepherd, Christopher Silva, Victoria Skonieczny, Nicole Silwinski, Alexander Stolarczyk, Madison Suchocki, Roselyn Terrazos-Moreno, Joanna Tran, Maxwell Turgeon, Christian Twano, Daniel Vala, Emma Valade, Elaina Vass, Julianna Vass, Jessica Veilleux, Kira Venables, Oksana Veres, Michael Vesci, Lucia Visconti, Benjamin Weyman, David Winslow and Bailey Womack.

Grade 12

Ron Abraham, Samantha Arasimowicz, Syed Asar, Clara Bartlett, Rebecca Bernardo, Caroline Bielaszka, Elias Bitzarakis, Connor Buckley, Madeline Rose Camalig, Jennifer Casparino, Aeisha Cirunay, Victoria Cornell, Luca DiPaola, Mia Dulay, Valerie Dunsing, Sarah Ericson, Eric Evon, Amanda Famiglietti, Cameron Fedina, Cheyenne Fletcher, Shaylynn Frazon, Amanda Gagnon, Anthony Gangi, Hayley Gilchrest, Isabella Gorski, Taylor Green, Natalie Harackiewicz, Isha Jinwala, Maryjane Johnson, Richard Junquera, Taimoor Khan, Darien Kupec, Kayla LaRosa, Deanna LaVoie, Alexa Lazarowski and Kaila Lozada.

Also, Mackenzie Luiz, Blake Mamaclay, Karen Martinez, Darin Mathew, Austin Matteson, Jordan Mendelsohn, Giovanni Montano, Haylee Morgan, Casey Nash, Raymond Neistat, Kimberly Nguyen, Emily Pare, Tanvi Patel, Angela Petano, Douglas Phan, Kyle Pierson, Jessica Reyor, Grace Rizzuto, Nicole Saucier, Kiera Sheehan, Olesya Shturypita, Hannah Silverwatch, Brianna Simonetti, Johnny Sit, Marek Targonski, Anna Waldzinska, Carly Wanner-Hyde, Sylvia White, Megan Willgoos, Tessa Woods, McKayla Wyble, Dorian Zawisza and Victoria Zysk.

Honors

Grade 9

Kaylee Allen, Baha Alsaqri, Christia Alvizo, Andrew Barresi, Azya Bass, Delilah Bernartz, Tatiana Bilbraut, Victoria Birchall, Andrew Bogatz, Alissa Borselle, Jordan Brunetti, Simao Cabral, Jake Cardines, Anthony Carlson, Noah Carrasco, Jack Chomko, Matthew Dano, Ellia Dauch, Sean Davis, Anthony DeBlasio, Hannah Drew, Jason Dumais, Michael Frankiewicz, Theodore Fravel, Cole Gallicchio, Eric Garofolo, Jenna Girouard, Rebecca Goldstein, Aleks Gorski, Isabella Gugliotti, Alexander Haaser, Alaysiah Hall, Julia Holland, Ethan Johnson, Lauren Johnson, Jenaya Jorden and Tyler Joseffy.

Also, Patrick Juvenico, Alyssa Kempesta, Brianna Kennedy, Ciara Kilkenny, Amber Kogut, Janina Lacotera, Collin Liedke, Omar Majdoub, Zachary Marek, Janyah Marquez, Sophia Maselli, Julia Mazur, Jillian McCormick, Rashell Mezquia, Samantha Miller, Feduk Mirza, Izabela Moczydlowski, Kevin Montgomery, Jordi Morel, Tiasia Morton, Patrick Muczko, Vanessa Nardi, Holly Normandeau, Ryan O'Connor, Joseph Olandt, Ryan Peruta, Emily Petronio, Joshua Picklesimer, Daniella Pinho, Matthew Plourd, Katrina Porter, Vanessa Quaranta, Kristina Ramsaroop and De'Jah Register.

Also, Vanessa Root, Andrew Rothauser, Nicole Santoro, Victoria Savluk, Jack Scanlon, Audrey Schuler, Diana Shumski, Austin Silva, Jayda Simon, Grace Smedberg, Emily Sousa, Robert Stabert, Erin Stenvall, Matthew Tanguay, Elizabeth Taschuk, Aaliyah Taylor, Dylan Taylor, Allyson Tofeldt, Leah Tofeldt, Lauren Tougas, David Townsend, Kailey Turf, Talisa Vasquez, Lexus Vega, Rachel Veilleux, Andrew Vesci, Autumn Vieira, Zoe Walk and Carli Weeden.

Grade 10

Ashley Arborio, Ashley Ault, Iris Barents, Matthew Barron, Christian Batista, Abigail Bourgoin, Connor Brennan, Julia Burton, Daniel Cloutier, Tayena Colon, Skylar Couillard, Spencer Couillard, Michaela Daly, Kiley Davies, Jan deCastro, Courtney DelBuono, Sabrina Denault, John Dietter, Aveontae Frazier, Colin Freeman, William Gardner, Ashley Gospodarczyk, Valerie Guerrette, Sashesa Haughton, Vivian Ho, Aryanna Horta, Cooper Johnson, Emma Johnson, Jamie Jose, Mateusz Kaczynski, Jacob Knowlton, Stephanie Kubish, Maksim Kyrychenko, Jay LaRosa, Nicholas Larson and Jillian Lavery.

Also, Shinia Lawson, Henry Levinson, Madelyn Mangiafico, Zachary Miller, Michelle Nguyen, Ashley Nogareda, Daniel O'Brien, Dominic Palaia, Luke Pappalardo, Danielle Parrotte, Anami Patel, Jonathan Perez, Robert Petronio, Jessica Pierzchalski, Brian Pizzoferrato, Giovanna Rivera, Kazimier Ruskys, Konrad Sadowniczyk, Emily Spano, Erik St. Pierre, Morgan Stegmaier, Sarah Stepak, Riley Tehan, Lauren Theriault, Abel Thomas, Stephanie Treviso, Dan Tuzolana, Lilia Uribe, Pernezha Veal, Abdiel Velez Santiago, Jason Vereneau, Joe Rene Villano, Blayne Wanner-Hyde and Sarah Zogu.

Grade 11

Shayna Acquarulo, Hannah Aforismo, Kadam AliBakhsh, Michael Allo, Brian Baglan, Briotney Bazzano, Kevin Bilbraut, Arayana Bracken, Angela Breault, Gabrielle Brodeur, McKayla Burgos, Matthew Cassone, Bahar Celikis, Matthew Connors, Zachary Correll, Michael Dano, Yanelly Del Valle, Kinsey DelBuono, Brandon Delgado, Brianna DeSouza, Jenna Dube, Michelle Duong, Justin Durocher, Lindsey Fairbank, Aleksandra Fiedziukiewicz, Gage Garcia, McKenna Gernander, Luke Gilchrist and Austin Gillis.

Also, Marielle Ghodbolt, Andrea Hall, Samantha Hammond, Journee Hardaway, Matthew Hawley, Susanna House, Mariester Jara, Ariel Keen, Rebecca Klett, Martha Krawczynski, Matthew Lallier, Jack Lam, Brittney Lenzi, Madison Lewicki, Ryan Loffredo, Jordan Margarido, Bruno Marques, Madison Marques, Ahmer Masood, Denny Mathew, Alexis Mercado, Jacob Mermelstein, Cassandra Moree, Dalia Murillo, Abrial Murray, Brittany Nedjoika, Samantha Nunes, Sean Oushana, Melanie Pantano, Rishi Parikh, Manav Patel and Megan Piatkowski.

Also, Aliyah Pirulli, Jonathan Plavcan, Sylwia Pogorzelska, Edgar Polanco, Brenna Pratte, Alyssa Reis, Mallory Rich, Lauren Rioux, Kayleigh Roman, Victoria Salvatore, Zachary Saunders, Nicholas Servidone, Elina Shahmarova, Taylor Sharp, Cameron Shaw, Nickolas Sherman, Kaito Smith, Brandon Spada, Joseph Taber, Nurjahn Telfer, Joey Terranova, Makaiyah Thompson, Shannon Tofeldt, Jennifer Tougas, Michelle Truong, Theresa Visconti, Katherine Volyanik, Jada Walker and Karlene Welles.

Grade 12

Mahdi Adittya, Emily Andrzejewski, Zachary Angelillo, Joelene Antonie, Vasco Augusto, James Bachand, Alana Barkman, Jessica Baruffi, Kenneth Bell, Alyssa Bellizzi, Kaitlyn Bernacki, Alexandrea Blanchflower, Ryan Bollacker, Ashliany Burgio, David Clukey, Theresa Cocola, Erica Condon, Brian Cooksey, Timothy Costa, Luis Cruz, Matthew DelBuono, Daniel DeWolf, Maxwell Dietter, Joey DiNino, Kyle Duffner, Joshua Felgate, Brett Frank, Grant Ganley, Alex Giansanti, Nicholas Golebiewski and Brianna Huebner.

Also, Sawera Hussan, Kyle Johnson, Matthew Johnson, Julie Jose, Jakub Karpiej, Stephen Keltonic, Marta Kempisty, Laura Lavorata, Tyler LeClair, Gihan Lee, Hayley Lemay, Kiah Levin, Benjamin Loura, Peter Lund, Hadeel Majdoub, Olivia Maldonado, Gabriella Mamet, Jordan Massini, Rhyanna Mehan, Rubbab Mirza, Joseph Montano, Klea Muharemi, Lenny Ogando, Pablo Ortiz, Adela Osmanovic, Francesca Parafati, Renata Pastuszak, Prachi Patel, Olivia Patoka, Dasha Pavlenko, Matthew Pinheiro, Adam Porell, Dennis Prokopa and Sarah Proulx.

Also, Brendan Pyzik, Dianelis Ramirez, LeAndra Reid, Makenna Rich, Nikolas Rojek, Chyanne Roman, Rachel Rossignol, Christopher Rowe, Victoria Ruskys, Matthew Saccavino, Diana Salcedo, Megan Santerre, Elizabeth Christine Santic, Samantha Simard, Jacob Sirois, Kayla Snyder, Yashvi Solanki, Michael Strong, Maria Teles, Samuel Theriault, Zachary Tinkham, Luong Tran, Nikki Truong, Victoria Usmanova, Dominic Valenti, Charlie Watts, Chance Wetmore, Evan Wetmore, Peter Wroblewski and Connor Youmans. **NL**

People notes

1. Dawn Pizzoferrato, center, received the Volunteer of the Year Award from Jefferson House. She began as a high school student, encouraged by her teachers and job coaches at the Newington Transition Academy. She is shown with **Jennifer Sell** of Sodexo, awards sponsor; **Patricia Morse,** Connecticut Baptist Homes and PierceCare board of directors chairwoman; **Mary Roche**, Jefferson House volunteer coordinator and nominator; and **Molly Savard,** the Bradley Home and awards committee chairwoman.

Rachel Elliott, Erin Feeney, Asa Guest, Oliver Hasson, Dawid Karpiej, Francesca Link, Luca Mirabello, Virgil Rona and **Michael Stamm** earned first honors for the first quarter at Northwest Catholic High School. **Blake Greenslade, Lauren Koldras** and **Thomas Meucci** earned second honors. Honorable mention went to **Justin Miguel** and **Dante Mirabello.**

2. Asa Guest, Francesca Link and **Virgil Rona** were among the 85 Northwest Catholic High School students inducted into the Aquinas Chapter of the National Honor Society.

Danielle Chylinski was elected president of the Student Senate during elections for the 2015-2016 school year at Western New England University.

Katelyn Dombrowski and **Jordan Aprea** were named to the dean's list at Lasell College.

Spencer Gaglione was named to the dean's list at York College.

Jamie Zelek was named to the dean's list at Champlain College. NL

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Events spotlight

Avoid identity theft

Feb. 4, 6 p.m.
Lucy Robbins Welles Library
95 Cedar St.
860-240-8705 or
daniel.davis@cga.ct.gov
State Rep. Gary Byron hosts this forum, which will feature Police Chief Stephen Clark, Consumer Protection Commissioner Jonathan Harris and Jodie Lemeris, manager of the local branch of Liberty Bank. The discussion will focus on ways people can protect themselves from deceptive tactics used to gain their private information.

Toastmasters open house

Feb. 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Lucy Robbins Welles Library
95 Cedar St.
5520.toastmastersclubs.org
The Cedar Hill Toastmasters of Newington will hold a free drop-in event to showcase it's organization that helps people learn how to speak in front of a group and gain leadership skills useful in the workplace. All of this is done in a supportive and educational environment. Refreshments will be served.

His Father Still: A Parenting Memoir

Feb. 24, 7 p.m.
Lucy Robbins
Welles Library
95 Cedar St.
860-665-8720 or
newingtonct.gov/library
Meet local author and advocate Tim Hollister and hear about his parenting book that has been featured in the Oprah Magazine and Publishers Weekly. Since the death of his 17-year-old-son, Reid, in a car crash in 2006, Hollister has become a nationally known advocate for safer teen driving. In 2009, he launched his national blog for parents of teen drivers, "From Reid's Dad." Books will be available for purchase.

State of the Town

Feb. 25, 8 a.m.
Newington High School
cafeteria
605 Willard Ave.
860-665-7551
The Newington Chamber Commerce presents its annual State of the Town event featuring Mayor Roy Zartarian and interim town manager Tanya Lane. Students enrolled in the NHS culinary program will provide a hot breakfast. Tickets are $15 for chamber members and $20 for non-members. Registration is required and the deadline is Feb. 19.

Bauernball

Feb. 27, 6 p.m.
Hartford Saengerbund
719 North Mountain Road
860-666-0760
This local German-American club presents a traditional "farmer's ball" for the first time in many years. Guests will be treated to a Kassler dinner of smoked ham, along with live dancing featuring musicians Bud and Linda Gramer. The cost is $30 per person and reservations are required. **NL**

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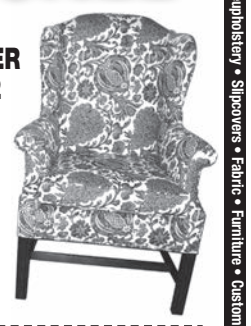
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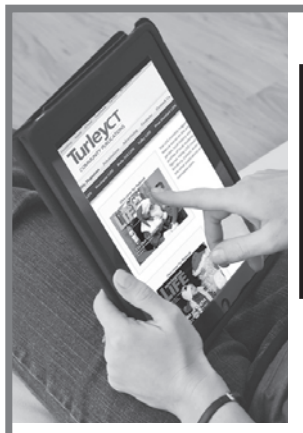
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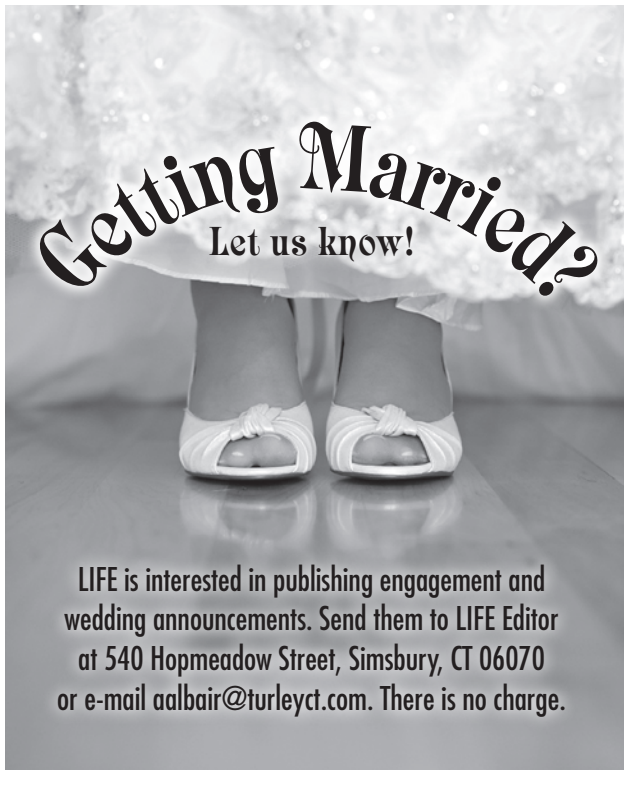
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Slice of LIFE

photos by Mark Jahne

A day at the senior and disabled center

1. George Scheyd is known for his passion to build birdhouses. This one, at left, has an outhouse motif. **2.** There's always something going on at the Newington Senior & Disabled Center. Matilda DeMaio sits in the lobby watching a community access television program featuring her son, William, the town director of parks and recreation. **3.** Bob Veklund is one of the folks who makes frequent use of the woodworking room. He prepares to precisely cut a piece of wood. He said donations of used power tools are always welcome. **4.** Judy Guite, Olimpia Antolini and K. Lin all take advantage of the exercise room. **5.** Anna Carducci works out on an elliptical trainer. **6.** One of the attractions at the center is its varied and inexpensive gift shop. Staffing the store on this day are Joel Small and Juliette Sweeney.

a new leash on LIFE

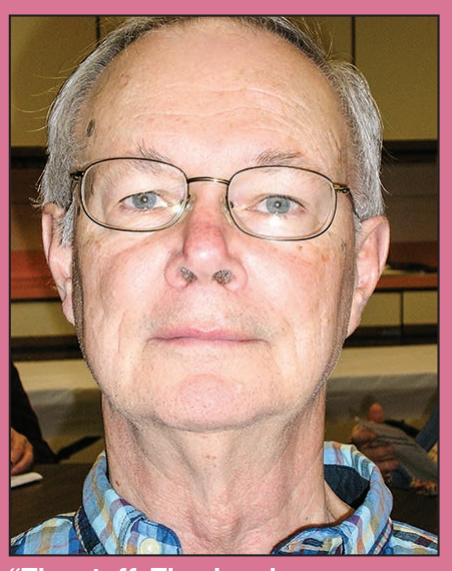
Winifred is a 3-year-old American pit bull mix. She would do well in either a single-family home or condominium and prefers children age 15 or older. She might be willing to share her new home with another dog, but no cats, please. Winifred has a lot of energy and needs daily exercise. The best fit for her is with a family that has prior experience with large breed dogs.

Harold is 12 years old, a domestic short hair mix. He's shy, but once comfortable with someone loves to sit on a lap and purr. He would do well in a home that does not have any other pets in it. Children are OK as long as they are gentle. His general demeanor is quiet and reserved. **NL**

Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.

Your thoughts:

This month we asked residents:
"What do you like most about the Newington Senior & Disabled Center?" Here are some of their responses.



"The staff. They're always knowledgeable and they knock themselves out to help you. Also, the physical facility."
– Larry Kunak

"The staff is very friendly and helpful. I like the programs here."
– Nancy Kunak

"There's a lot to do. I enjoy it very much."
– Wanda Giroux

News roundup

1

2

3

Data-Mail is tops

1. The Newington Economic Development Commission recently honored Data-Mail Inc. as its business of the year. Founded in 1971, it is the town's largest private employer. Mayor Roy Zartarian, left, presents the award to company head Andy Mandell.

The company employs more than 500 people in town and occupies more than 200,000 square feet of commercial space in its headquarters on Hartford Avenue. It also employs hundreds more in a facility in Windsor that also houses the largest post office between New York and Boston.

The family owned company is a nationally recognized leader in the direct mail business, serving Fortune 100 companies in diverse industries from health care to retail, publishing and technology.

Over the years, Data-Mail has made numerous charitable contributions. Each summer the company sponsors the Harry and Edythe Mandell Concert Series – named for the parents of Data-Mail founder Andy Mandell – and its contributions made the construction of the Mill Pond gazebo possible.

EMS fund drive begins

Newington Emergency Medical Services, formerly known as the Newington Volunteer Ambulance Corps, has commenced its annual fund drive. The mailing is designed to secure money for the town's volunteer emergency medical services.

NEMS members volunteered more than 17,000 hours this past year to provide emergency medical care to Newington. Donations are tax-deductible and are integral to the organization's annual budget.

These funds are vital to NEMS due to decreasing reimbursements from insurance payments and an ever-increasing operating budget due to acquisition and maintenance of medical equipment, community training programs, increased training requirements for members, the cost of ancillary supplies provided to the Newington Police Department, rising utility costs and vehicle upkeep.

An hour of code

2. In a world where students are exposed to technology on a nearly constant basis, many have not had a chance to explore the computer science and technology that works together to build the components they see on the screen. The Hour of Code recently held in the Newington Public Schools helped to increase their exposure to computer sciences and the coding that creates computer software, games, databases, websites, financial predictions and more.

The Hour of Code is a nationwide initiative by Computer Science Education Week and Code.org to introduce millions of students to one hour of computer science and computer programming. Young people across the nation and around the globe participated in Hour of Code events during the first week of December.

Hundreds of Newington students of all grade levels participated in events in each of the schools. Beginners of all ages, including some staff members, started at Code.org, where they were exposed to the Hour of Code with a one-hour activity. Participants chose from a variety of self-guided tutorials on their Chromebooks, in computer labs, from classroom iPads, and even from their smartphones.

Three educators certified

In order to hone skills and showcase proficiency with Google Apps for Education (GAFE), Google offers educators the option to become Google certified educators. This provides the opportunity for teachers and staff to expand their learning and up the ante in their classrooms by using all of the options and tools that GAFE offers.

At the beginning of the school year, 80 Newington Public Schools staff members committed to these certifications. Three challenged themselves to go a step further to become Google certified trainers. They are: Brenda Dzwil, elementary level instructional coach; John "Jay" Salerno, director of education technology; and Donald Vallera, K-8 educational technology program leader.

Rotary supports webcams

3. Ed Steremberg, owner and operator of Wave Car Wash, presented a check for $650 to Newington Rotary Club President Cherilyn Spatola. Together with the proceeds raised when Rotary and Steremberg partnered for a car wash fundraiser, the added money enables the club to purchase a specialized webcam.

The technology will benefit families of babies born prematurely or with complex medical conditions and who are confined to long periods of hospitalization at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center's neonatal intensive care units in Hartford or Farmington.

Last year, Newington Rotary presented the medical center with four webcams at a cost of $2,500 each. Two more webcams are slated to be donated within a few months as part of a community service project involving nine area Rotary clubs.

Answering the calls

Volunteers with Newington Emergency Medical Services responded to 145 emergency calls during the month of November. Of these, 125 were handled by the on-duty crew and 12 more by members responding from home to staff the second ambulance.

These calls included 43 basic life support transports and 55 advanced life support transports. NEMS members donated 1,440 hours to call response, community events and ongoing training.

Masons bring lodge to him

4. Middlewoods of Newington resident Ralph Holmstrom has been a Mason for 72 years. He was raised to the degree of master mason in 1943, served as worshipful master of Walnut Hill Lodge 139 (now part of Unity Lodge 148) in 1949, served as district deputy from 1983-1985, and served as lodge secretary for 38 years.

When health limitations made it difficult from him to attend meetings, a few brothers from Unity Lodge 148 in New Britain and Frederick Franklin Lodge 14 in

Plainville decided to bring the lodge to him. With the help of Middlewoods Executive Director Stacy Kesl, they set up a lodge room at Middlewoods with all of the items necessary for a meeting.

Friends and family attended a special presentation during which "Brother Holmstrom" was presented with a Distinguished Service Award by Worshipful Master Keath Romano. Thirty-two brothers from several different lodges were in attendance.

Holmstrom will turn 102 years old in February. Shown with him are two of his three daughters, Kathy Hickey (left) and Jane Holmstrom.

Improved CTfastrak parking

The state Department of Transportation has upgraded passenger parking plans for various CTfastrak bus rapid transit system stations in Newington, New Britain and West Hartford.

Eleven more parking spaces will be added at the Newington Junction station this spring. There will also be 90 or more spaces added at the Cedar Street Station. Leased parking

space agreements are being pursued at several locations in the area of CTfastrak stations.

Exercise for older adults

5. Older adults seeking improved overall health and wellness are welcome to join the GoodLife Fitness program at Cedar Mountain Commons, 3 John H. Stewart Drive. Under the direction of an exercise physiologist, participants will be able to achieve and maintain their fitness goals through this individualized exercise program.

Each person's routine is specifically tailored and modified according to his or her abilities and goals. Benefits may include better mobility, increased strength and stamina, satisfaction and a sense of well-being.

The GoodLife Fitness Center is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, or to schedule a visit, call 860-665-7901. In the photo, exercise physiologist Jared Scoville adjusts an exercise bike for Irene Steidl.

Test homes for radon

The Central Connecticut Health District encourages residents to test their homes for radon. It is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that results from the natural break down of uranium in soil, rock and water.

Exposure to radon gas indoors causes more than 20,000 deaths annually across the country. It is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.

Those interested in testing the air quality in their homes may purchase an easy-to-follow radon test kit from the health district for $8. Call 860-721-2822 or see ccthd.org.

Ringing in 2016

6. A family New Year's Eve celebration was held Dec. 31 at the Lucy Robbins Welles Library. Children and their families participated in crafts, such as making noise makers and party hats, face painting and games. At 11:59 p.m. families cheered as the New Year's ball "dropped" to welcome in 2016.

Board wins CABE honor

The Newington Board of Education was presented with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Level Two Leadership Award during the annual CABE and Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Convention.

Kiwanis feeds the hungry

7. A $1,000 check from the Newington Kiwanis Club was presented to the town Human Services Department to help provide Christmas dinners for needy local families. Human Services Coordinator Carol Labrecque, left, thanked Kiwanis Secretary Dr. Ellen Leonard.

The money comes from proceeds acquired at the seasonal Big K Flea Market, where visitors donate $1 as admission. The market reopens in April and is staffed by volunteers from the Kiwanis Club and students from the Newington High School Key Club, the youth arm of Kiwanis.

NEF awards $4,000

The Newington Education Foundation has awarded more than $4,000 in mini-grants to educators in the Newington Public Schools. These grants provide funding for innovative projects and programs that enhance student learning and will benefit more than 1,000 students.

Grants awarded include: Apps for Education, birds of prey presentation, beautify Elizabeth Green School with student artwork, Broadway classroom musical/theater song and movement, code crew computer programming and robotics, Colonial kids, Cooking with Kids: Books and Cooks, integrating mindfulness, Kind Kids Club and Young Producers program.

Funding for mini-grants is made possible through donations from community members, school employees, local businesses, and the sale of Newington afghans. See newingtonef.org for information about making a donation or to learn about volunteer opportunities.

MDC warns of imposters

The Metropolitan District Commission is advising customers to be cautious of two individuals posing as water company employees in an attempt to enter homes. On Jan. 13, two men claiming to be from the water company gained access to a Newington residence in the vicinity of Hartford Avenue, claiming that they needed to check the water.

MDC field employees wear clothing and drive vehicles clearly marked with the MDC logo. They also carry photo identification badges and the district encourages customers to ask to see them. If there is any doubt about the individual's identity or motives, or the authenticity of his or her credentials, do not allow entry into your home and call the police. **NL**

February *calendar*

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

2 **Play with Us,** 10:15 a.m., for families with young children who have special needs, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library, also Feb. 9 and 16

Let's Make Music Together, noon, for ages 2-4 with a caregiver, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Brown Bag it With a Documentary, noon, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

4 **Avoid Identity Theft,** 6 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library or daniel.davis@cga.ct.gov

Evening Book Discussion Group, 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

6 **Libraries are Magic,** 2 p.m., for ages 4 and older, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

8 **Read, Play, Learn,** 6 p.m., for ages 3-4, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

9 **Stories and Art,** noon, for ages 2-4 and a caregiver, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Be a Smart Cookie … Read, 2 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

National Alliance on Mental Illness, 7 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-205-9542 or 860-830-2129

10 **Junior Cookbook Club,** 6:30 p.m., for grades K-2, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

11 **Computer Health Tips,** 10:30 a.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

MS Support Group, noon to 2 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-667-1314 or 860-236-2751

Tech 4 U, 1:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also 8:30 p.m. Feb. 25

Cozytime Stories, 4 p.m., for grades K-2, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Tech Troubleshooting with Teens, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

12 **Winter Reading Finale,** 10 a.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Teen Afterhours Movie Night: Valentine's Day Edition, 6:30 p.m., for ages 13-18, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

13 **Tales to Tails,** 1 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also 4:30 p.m. Feb. 18

16 **Movies and More @ the Library: "Far from the Madding Crowd,"** 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Cinema City, Theater 1: Shaun the Sheep, 1p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Cinema City, Theater 2: Goosebumps, 1 p.m., for ages 7 and older, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Teen Craft Blowout, 6:30 p.m., for grades 6-12, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

17 **Chess Club,** 4 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Cookbook Club, 6:30 p.m., for grades 3-6, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Toastmasters Open House, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Cedar St., 5520.toastmastersclubs.org

21 **Lego Junior Makerspace,** 2:45 p.m., for ages 4-7, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

22 **An Afternoon with the Gillettes,** 1 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Parent Child Workshop, 6 p.m., for ages 1-4 with a parent, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also 10:15 a.m. Feb. 23 and 6 p.m. Feb. 29

23 **Half-Day Fun,** 2 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

GFWC Newington/ Wethersfield Woman's Club, 6 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-666-4371

Pajama Yoga, 6:30 p.m., for ages 5-8, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

24 **His Father Still: A Parenting Memoir,** 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

25 **State of the Town Breakfast,** 8 a.m., Newington High School cafeteria, 605 Willard Ave., 860-665-7551

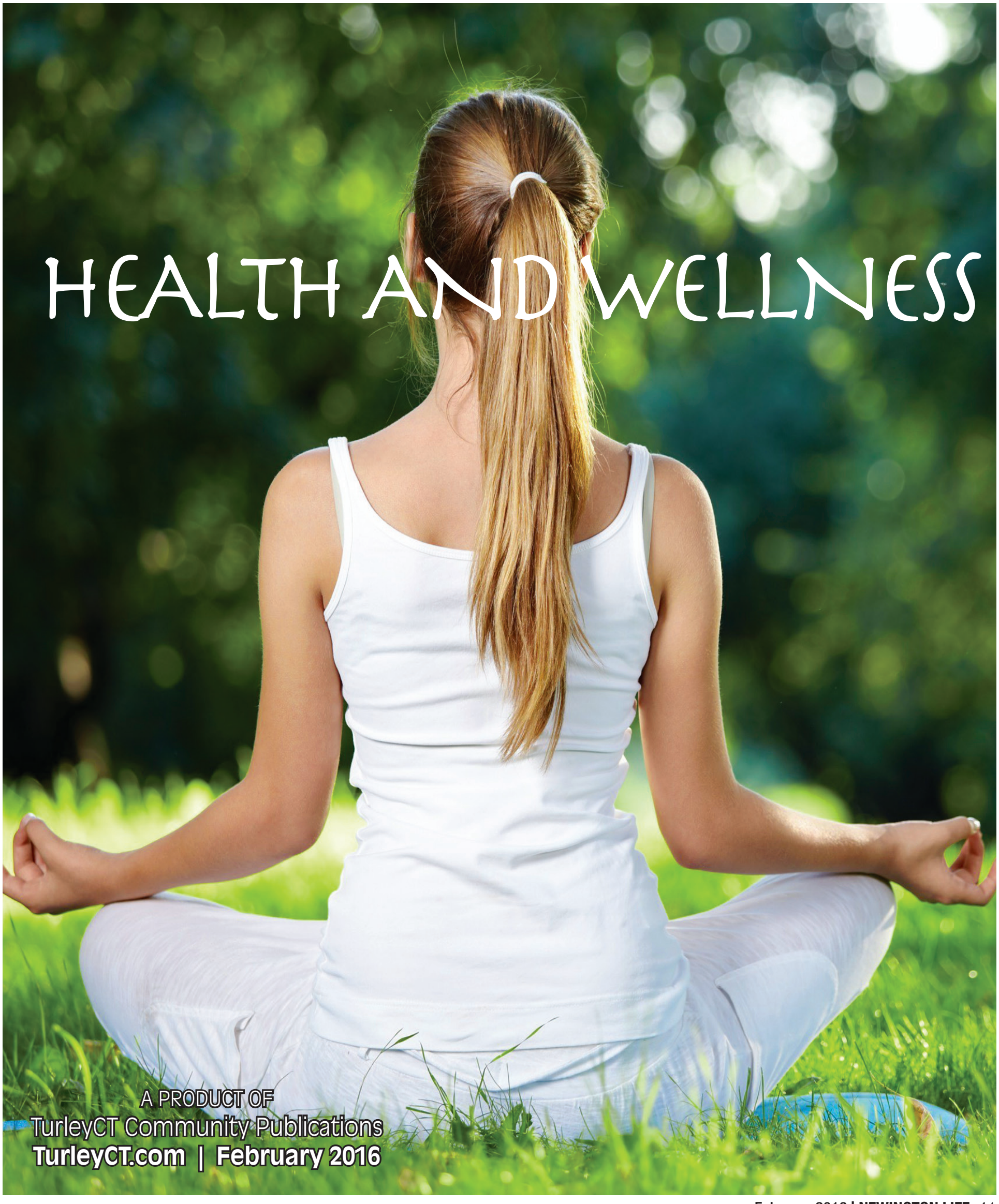
The Joy of Coloring: An Adult Coloring Group, 10:30 a.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Film Based on the Book "Rebecca," 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

27 **Construction Club,** 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Bauernball, 6 p.m., Hartford Saengerbund, 719 North Mountain Road, 860-666-0760, $30 per person

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.


HEALTH AND WELLNESS
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TurleyCT Community Publications
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Have a heart

Locals bounce back from health scares

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Sometimes major health events come out of the blue. Other times, the symptoms have been building for years, but we don't always know that they're a disaster in the making. These area residents have all faced major heart issues and are doing great on the other side. In honor of American Heart Month, they've shared their stories.

Name: Michael Fox
Age: 71
Hometown: Newington
Occupation: retired
Success story:
A couple years before the surgery, I was having problems catching my breath. I usually use the VA. They've been very good to me. Cardiology checked it out; they had gastroenterology check it out; the lung people. There wasn't really anything wrong. I had an angiogram a few years ago. There was some blockage but not enough to do anything about it. A year or so passed and this keeps going on and on.

On Oct. 12, Columbus Day, I take my regular bath, I read the paper, I'm having chest pain. It's the holiday. The VA here is closed. I decided to take an ambulance to Saint Francis. I'm glad I did.

They keep me overnight and say they're going to give me a nuclear stress test tomorrow, which is

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About the Director

Joe Allen, PT, DPT, OCS received his BS in Nutrition and Sport from the University of Connecticut and his Doctorate of Physical therapy from Sacred Heart University. Joe is currently a Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist (OCS) and is certified in the Graston Technique for management of soft tissue injuries. Joe's clinical interests include manual therapy, post-surgical, chronic pain, and athletic and sport injuries. He is an active member of the Connecticut Physical Therapy Association and the Newington Chamber of Commerce.

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Health & *Wellness*

Tuesday. I take the nuclear stress test, and they say they need to do an angiogram. By Friday, after all the rigmarole, at 8 a.m., I'm in the operating room having double bypass. I had three blocked arteries, but I didn't have enough blood vessels to do all three.

After the surgery, I spent a couple of days at the hospital. Then I went to Jefferson House here in Newington for rehabilitation. I spent almost a week there. I'm home and scheduled for cardiac rehab. It's a three-month program and, boy, am I glad I did it.

I'm feeling so good now. I go in three days a week for an hour. I do treadmill work, stationary bike work and free weights. I walk a couple of miles at home two, three, maybe five days a week. I used to walk five miles a day.

I started getting used to eating salad either with lunch or for lunch. For breakfast, I have a fruit smoothie with nonfat yogurt or 2 percent milk. I lost 20 pounds. I feel much better. I could go dancing every night now.

Name: Mary Lu Maturo
Age: 75
Hometown: Wethersfield
Occupation: retired
Success story:

I've never had heart problems; I've never had anything. I've never been to the hospital except to have babies. Last March when I went to bed at night and would lie on my side, I would feel my heart pounding and I'd feel a pressure behind my sternum. I told my doctor and he did a cardiogram and sent me to the hospital. They did more tests and I continued on.

I exercised at the senior center three times a week. I liked to walk with friends at the Wethersfield Green, but whenever I would start walking, I'd get that pressure behind my breast bone, so I started to just meet them for coffee after. I'd get out of breath, but not terribly. I could still go on with my normal routine.

Then in the summertime, it got more frequent. On Labor Day weekend, I went to close two umbrellas outside, one by the pool and one by the patio. I got so out of breath.

That had never happened and that frightened me.

I called my doctor and he said to go in for a cardiogram. There was a cancellation the next day. My doctor said, "We won't fool around." So, the following Wednesday, they did an angiogram. I figured everything would be fine. They told me I had 90 percent blockage in four arteries and I wouldn't be going home. It was done Friday morning on Sept. 11. I was in the hospital for about a week, then in Jefferson House.

I did really well there. Each week I felt better. I never had any pain to speak of. If I took a deep breath, it would hurt. I was all set to leave Jefferson House, when I got an infection in my leg, so I had to stay a little longer.

Now I feel great. I exercise three times a week at the hospital. Today, I signed up with the town's fitness room. I plan on walking on the treadmill. It makes me feel good, it makes my legs feel stronger. If I don't exercise, it makes it harder to go up the stairs. I don't use salt at all. I feel like I'm in my 50s again!

Name: Carolyn Levine
Age: 71
Hometown: West Hartford
Occupation: professional conservator and certified geriatric care manager
Success story:

My job was quite stressful and I had high blood pressure. I was on medication for it, but I was very active. I never saw this coming.

We were at a friend's house for the evening playing cards and there were 12 of us or so and I just didn't feel that great. We went home and I was getting into bed and I got a terrible pain in back of my neck. So, I laid down on the bed and my husband called the doctor, a friend of ours, and he said, "Give her five minutes and if it happens again, go to the emergency room."

That's what we did. That was the first sign of anything. That's probably when the aortic aneurysm dissected. I went into the emergency room at about 11 at night and they started

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Reduce blood sugar
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Eat better
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Lose weight
When you shed extra fat and unnecessary pounds, you reduce the burden on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and skeleton. You give yourself the gift of active living, you lower your blood pressure and you help yourself feel better, too.

Stop smoking
Cigarette smokers have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease. If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.

doing all kinds of tests, but nothing was showing up. My husband finally went home at 4 or 5 in the morning. I said, "Go get my clothes and my cell phone. I'll be going home in the morning."

The thoracic surgeon and cardiologist were there looking over all the records and they said, "You know what? I have one more test to do and if it's what I think it is, she'll need to go right into surgery. Only 1 percent of people survive a dissected aortic aneurysm. Even if she does come out of surgery, she'll be compromised because of the lack of oxygen. She will not be the person you know." That's how they left it with my husband and adult son and daughter, and 13 hours, later I came out of surgery.

While in cardiac intensive care, I was a code blue. I stopped breathing and they had to re-intubate me. By the third week, they put me in the step-down cardiac unit. I had no idea until I was ready to go to rehab what really happened to me. I went to Mount Sinai Rehab/Saint Francis, I think for 12 days. When I started rehab, I wasn't really walking well at all and I kept falling asleep. In the first exercise, I had to take soft alphabet blocks and put them in order and I had no idea how to do that.

I had always been doing water aerobics. When I was healed and after I had physical therapy in my home, I went back to the water aerobics. I didn't have the appetite that I used to. I'd lost probably 35 pounds during all of this. I just had no taste for anything except one friend would make me carrot soup and I loved that and chicken soup and that's what my diet was for a long time.

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I'm doing great! Except if I talk too much, I do start coughing because my nerves were damaged in my throat from all the intubation, so my voice has changed a little bit. I have some swallowing issues. Other than that, I am perfectly fine.

When I got home from rehab, I started calling my clients; they're all elderly and they knew something had happened to me. I would talk to them on the phone and finally, I started going to visit them. I'm working full time. I remember all my clients and all their stories and I just love them. It's a rebirth; it's a miracle. I wear a bracelet all the time that says "blessed."

Name: Linda Nadeau
Age: 66
Hometown: Farmington
Occupation: homemaker
Success story:
My regular doctor did blood work with my physical, and my cholesterol was really high, well over 300. He wanted me to go on statins and I just refused to do that. I got a card in the mail that [Bradley Biskup, a physician assistant at UConn Health's Calhoun Cardiology Center] was doing a talk on cholesterol and lowering cholesterol. I was really impressed by everything he said. After it was over, I went up and asked if he sees people privately. I made an appointment; that was maybe two years ago.

We went over all my blood work and my history. He told me what supplements to take and when to take them. I take vitamin D and for cholesterol, Choleast (red yeast rice), also calcium and fish oil. To help bring down the triglycerides, he said fiber is really important, so he suggested Metamucil, but any type of fiber is very important.

As far as exercise, he helped me with that. He said to do the "talk test." I was a runner and I am a runner. He said whenever I'm doing any exercise at all I should be able to say my name and address.

I've just been taking the supplements he recommended and eating healthier than I had been prior. I've had amazing results. I think he is great. He does things naturally and tries not to have patients take the statins. He said if we had to go that route, we would, but we have not. It's gone down a lot; it's gone down more than 100 points. I was seeing him every three months at first and now it's every six months.

I have more energy. I exercise six days a week. I do running and I do boot camp. I do something six days a week. And my blood pressure is low. I think it's all related to working with him. He's amazing. Everything he's told me to do has been nothing but helpful.

Name: Bonnie Gearin
Age: 71
Hometown: Farmington
Occupation: retired first and second grade teacher
Success story:
My mom died at the age of 50. There are heart problems on both sides of my parents' families, so I had always been conscious of this.

I had the heart attack in February 2003. In September/October (2002), all of us that taught little ones caught bronchitis. Everyone got rid of it; mine just lingered. I kept going back to the doctor. I became such a pest. I kept saying, "Are you sure this is not heart-related?" He treated me for pneumonia, for bronchitis. He diagnosed me with asthma and gave me an inhaler.

I was at Our Lady of Calvary Retreat, which is probably four minutes away from UConn [Health]. On Sunday morning, I felt short of breath, so I used the inhaler, which was not a good thing to use. I went up to mass, and Sister Ann said, "You look as white as ghost. Do I need to call 911?" I did not even hesitate. I said yes. I can't give you a reason. I knew there was something big going on.

There were two retreatants that weekend who were not scheduled to be there, two doctors from Long Island. They immediately came out and felt it was heart-related. That was a gift that they were there.

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Health & *Wellness*

I went to the emergency room and they did all the blood work they do. Dr. David Hager in the cardiology department just happened to be available. He said to me, "I would really like to keep you overnight." I needed to get a substitute teacher. I had all the paper goods for a teacher breakfast the next day. I asked if I could go home and come back. I was all dressed to go, and he said they were going to keep me overnight. At 4 in the morning, I had what they call "the widow maker." The only reason I survived was I was already in the hospital; I was already in the cardiac unit.

Dr. Hager happened to have stayed in the hospital because he was there within seconds. Women need to know you might have a heart attack and not even know it. I was going to get a T-shirt that said, "I had a heart attack and I never even had a pain."

Dr. Hager put a stent in to open an artery that was 100 percent blocked and another was 75 or 80 percent blocked. UConn cardiology is absolutely phenomenal. That's a good part of the reason I made such a healthy comeback. The care was outstanding.

I was in the hospital five days. I did go back to work. I made exercise a definite part of my day, and I shed some pounds. I did change my lifestyle. I was working on my master's at the same time. I was going to school, coping with teenagers, teaching, my eating habits were probably the worst. Burger King was where I stopped on the way home.

I see a physician's assistant every three or four months just to keep tabs on things. I exercise; I really try to adhere to the Mediterranean diet as close as possible. I feel great.

The last time I was at a cardiology appointment, the doctor told me if I saw a doctor who did not know I'd had a heart attack, that doctor would not be able to pick it up by listening to my heart. That heart attack did a lot of damage to my heart.

The fact I'm not exhibiting any evidence of having a heart attack, all in all, I think it's a pretty miraculous experience. **NL**

The last time I was at a cardiology appointment, the doctor told me if I saw a doctor who did not know I'd had a heart attack, that doctor would not be able to pick it up by listening to my heart. .... The fact I'm not exhibiting any evidence of having a heart attack, all in all, I think it's a pretty miraculous experience."

– Bonnie Gearin

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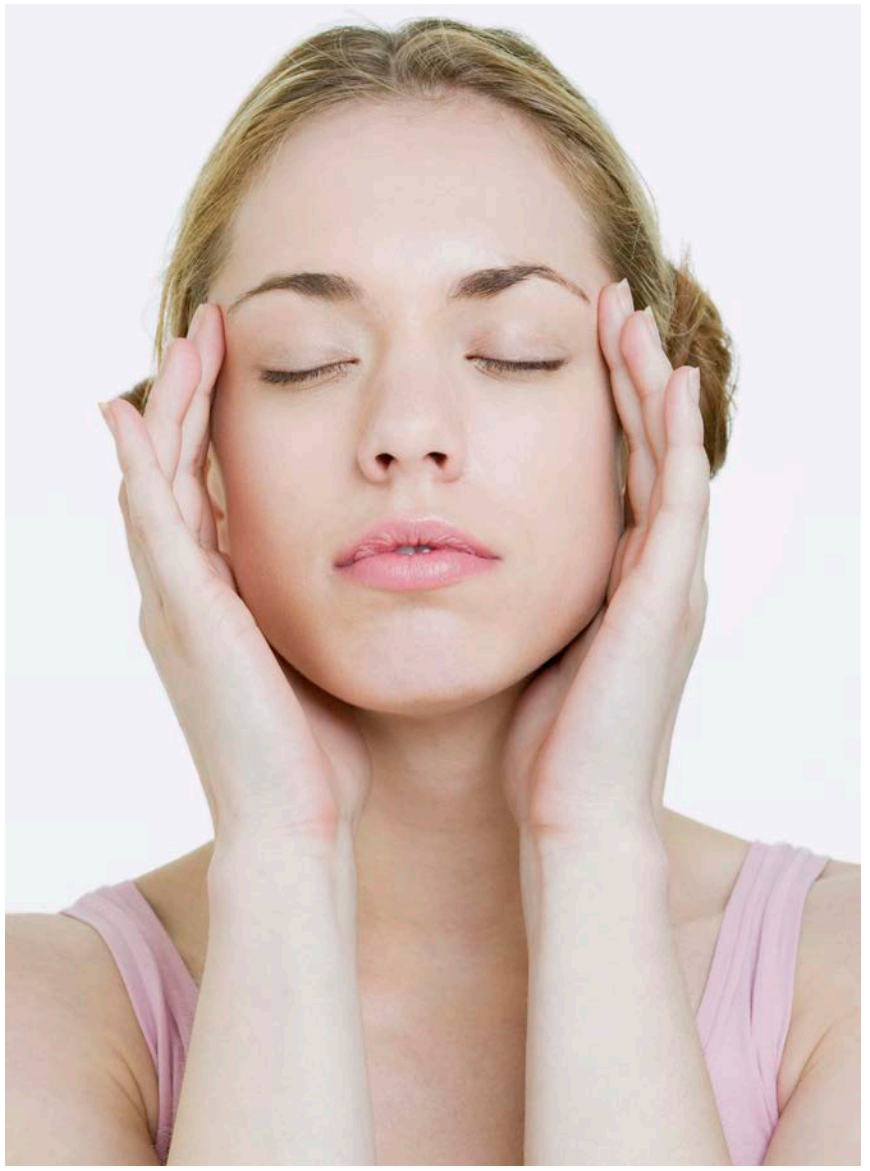

Five ways to stay mentally *strong*

by Alison Jalbert
Assistant Editor

New Year's resolutions often include pledges to improve on physical strength, which is important, but an equally important area to work on is mental strength. Being mentally strong can provide benefits in all areas of life.

Jayne Dean, a licensed marriage and family therapist and practicing psychotherapist at West Hartford Counseling Center, said there are many different aspects that make a person mentally healthy.

"They all relate to each other," she said. "If you pick one area, usually the other areas will begin to change."

Here are five ways to increase mental strength.

Take care of yourself. Basic things such as getting enough sleep, eating well and exercising are all key to being mentally strong, Dean said. It's also important to include quiet time in life, whether it's meditation, reflection, prayer, or simply taking time to rest.

Be aware of your emotions. Dean said "an expressed feeling is a managed feeling," meaning a person is able to identify what they are feeling and put it into words, either for themselves or to someone else.

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That helps manage stress and deal with emotional charges that happen in the body.

Identify bad habits and work toward breaking them. A habit is usually a way of managing stress or dealing with a need, Dean explained.

The path to eliminating that can be difficult, but it begins with a person recognizing they want to make a change and considering what need is met by what they're doing, whether it's smoking, overeating, drinking, compulsive exercising or rigidity.

"It begins there – having some compassion for yourself as to how that need came into existence," Dean said. "It starts with befriending and learning about the habit. That contemplation period is a very, very important part of the process. There are actually things happening in your brain to shift the pattern."

Habits can't necessarily be broken overnight, but starting to shift the way in which it's thought about shifts what a person can do about it, then the actual physical changes that need to be made will eventually happen.

Have a strong social network. This is important for mental strength because it enables a person to be able to express themselves to another person, Dean said. It also means there are people around to do pleasurable activities with, and there are positive events planned on the calendar. Having a strong social circle also makes it easier to reach out and ask for help when it's needed.

Grow by encountering the new. Seeking out and encountering new experiences, along with learning a new skill, trying something new, or simply mixing up a routine can help with mental strength.

"We can all get habituated into automatically doing the same things the same way at the same time," Dean said.

"[Changing routines] can help build those mental muscles. Mix up those patterns, mix up those things that you do every day."

This does a lot neurologically.

"Doing things new and different allows more information to bubble up, to become available and guide you in everyday life." **NL**

"We can all get habituated into automatically doing the same things the same way at the same time. [Changing routines] can help build those mental muscles. Mix up those patterns, mix up those things that you do every day."

– Jayne Dean, a licensed marriage and family therapist and practicing psychotherapist at West Hartford Counseling Center

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How to bake healthier *treats*

Baking can be a fun family activity and a a rather delicious science experiment. Perhaps one of the few pitfalls of baking, however, is indulging in too many sweet treats when taste testing and then enjoying the fruits of your labors.

But bakers concerned about their health can substitute healthy ingredients when recipes call for foods bakers would prefer to avoid. The following ingredients can make healthy additions to baked-good recipes without sacrificing flavor.

· Whole wheat flour: Refined white flour may not be the healthiest ingredient, so try whole wheat flour, which is full of nutrients and an extra dose of fiber. Fiber can help lower the risk for heart disease and diabetes. Try slightly less than one cup of whole wheat flour for regular flour as a swap if a recipe calls for one cup of flour.

· Fruit puree: When a recipe calls for oil, margarine, butter or shortening, consider replacing such ingredients with fruit purees, which often add moisture and texture just as well but without the same amount of calories.

· Greek yogurt: Greek yogurt is a powerhouse of protein and flavor with relatively few calories per serving. It can make a super substitution in recipes for things like sour cream, buttermilk or even cream cheese.

· Applesauce: Believe it or not, unsweetened applesauce also can replace some or all of the sugar in a recipe. When doing a 1:1 ratio swap, reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe by 1/4 cup.

· Chocolate nibs: Nibs are processed morsels that do not have the same amount of added sugar as many chocolate chips. Dark chocolate nibs can provide a healthy dose of antioxidants as well.

· Evaporated skim milk: Try evaporated skim milk in place of heavy cream to make whipped cream for a low-fat option.

Baking brings family together, and the treats prepare can make an enjoyable finale to a great meal. With healthy substitutions, any recipe can be altered for the better. **NL**

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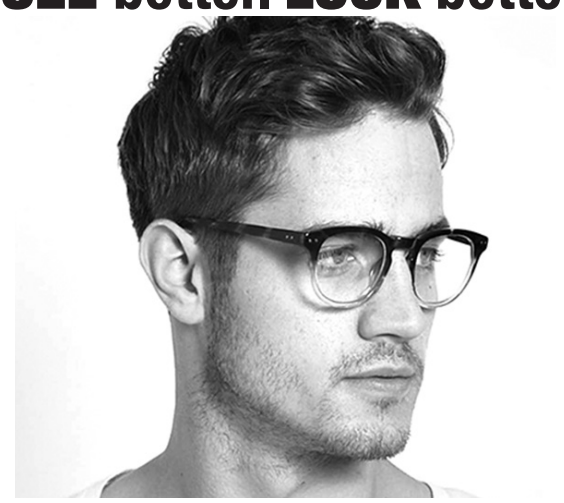

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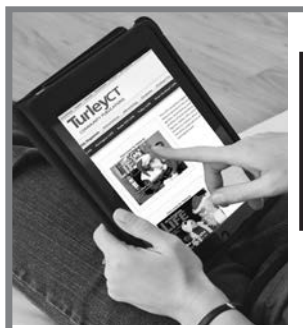

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Finding *balance*

Experts offer thoughts on different approaches to wellness

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Whether the body is in pain that needs to be addressed or one seeks to develop a better mind and body connection, there are different ways to approach overall health and to give the body what it needs.

Physical Therapy

Eric Milman, co-owner of the Physical Therapy Center of Rocky Hill, said he takes a slightly different approach to wellness than other physical therapists.

"Our philosophy is a little bit outside of the box of most physical therapists," he said. "We really try to figure out what mechanism is causing the pain."

Milman compared the view he and his partner, John Paholski, take on taking care of their bodies to car maintenance.

"It's like taking your car in for an inspection," he explained. "You want to find out what may lead to a break down in the future."

By looking at the whole body, and not only the part that is in pain, Milman said he can help to treat the ailment more efficiently and with long effects.

"Take for example if someone comes in with shoulder pain," he said. "It could be that your spine isn't

"It's like taking your car in for an inspection. You want to find out what may lead to a break down in the future."

– Eric Milman, co-owner of the Physical Therapy Center

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Health & *Wellness*

flexible enough, so when you reach up for things you feel it in your shoulder."

By looking for the causes of pain throughout the entire body, Milman said he and his partner can work to erase pain and not just manage it.

"If your car is leaking oil, you can keep adding oil to it, but it hasn't changed the leak," he said.

At his practice, Milman said that each patient is looked at individually and has a program specifically developed for them.

All appointments are one-on-one, with the physical therapist allowing the professional to watch their clients as they complete their exercises.

"We think it's important to give them that one-on-one attention to make sure they are completing it correctly," Milman said. "Even if it's a simple exercise, if you aren't doing it correctly, it's just a waste of time."

According to Milman, this approach to wellness has many benefits, the largest of which being the ability to treat the cause of pain and discomfort instead of only the symptoms.

"We would like to think that one of the benefits is well-being going forward," he said. "Hopefully, that person will get better and not need more therapy down the road."

Low-Impact

For many people looking to increase their exercise, finding a low impact approach is necessary.

"Sometime the fitness world tends to think that pushing harder is always better, but Pilates has the approach that working smarter is better," Jessica Fritz-Peters, owner of Pilates Defined in West Hartford, said.

"You don't have to jump around to get a great workout," Susan Valente, owner of Core Barre and Pilates Studio in Newington, said. "[Pilates] works the body safely and efficiently."

Initially developed as a form of rehabilitation, Pilates is a low-impact approach to wellness that has participants engaging their core muscles and can be easily individualized for the greatest results.

Another approach that Valente teaches at her studio is barre, a ballet-inspired workout that Valente similarly describes as low- or no-impact.

In addition to the effects that these programs have during a class or one-on-one session, Pilates instructor Maggie Down, owner of Personal Euphoria Pilates in Wethersfield, said that these types of

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exercise can have an impact on daily life.

"To me, one of the biggest benefits of Pilates is that it teaches you how to use your body properly, so whether you're walking, lifting laundry or just sitting at your desk, you're more in-tune with your body," she said.

Body and soul

When it comes to overall health, physical wellbeing is tied to our emotional wellbeing.

"There's some new research out that's very validating for what we do about how our body and our mind connections are so interrelated," said Sandy Byrne, owner of River Rock Yoga in Wethersfield. "The better I can feel and know my body, the more healthy I will be both emotionally and physically."

Because human beings hold stress physically, tension results.

"If we feel victorious, our bodies are open," Byrne said.

Jen Leavitt, studio manager at West Hartford Yoga, agrees.

"Yoga is the process of connecting breathing and movement, so it also is an opportunity to really start listening to your body, It's really part of a whole mindfulness experience."

Yoga has the potential to bring about a sense of calm, Leavitt said, and to become more in tune with their bodies.

"Yoga as we use the term in the western world means a lot of different things to a lot of different people," she said. "Keep working until you find what fits and know that there's really something for everyone." **NL**

Physical Therapy Center of Rocky Hill is located at 1975 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill. It can be reached at 860-513-1431. West Hartford Yoga is located at 23 Brook Street, West Hartford. It can be reached at 860-953-9642 or online at www.westhartfordyoga.com. River Rock Yoga is located at 274 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. It can be reached at 860-757-3339 or at www.rryoga.com. Pilates Defined is located at 1143 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford. It can be reached at 860-899-1515. Core Barre and Pilates Studio is located at 85 Market Square, Newington. It can be reached at 860-938-8751. Personal Euphoria is located at 400 Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield. It can be reached at 860-748-7574

"There's some new research out that's very validating for what we do about how our body and our mind connections are so interrelated."

– Sandy Byrne, owner of River Rock Yoga

"It's trying to make you aware of your body in all these different positions so you can transfer that to anything life may throw at you."

Both Valente and Fritz-Peters said they have seen similar benefits with their clients.

"It really comes down to strength and safety," Valente said. "The stronger you are, the safer you are in your body."

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Editorial

Change is always controversial

There is much discussion in town these days about the newly elected Town Council flexing its muscles and starting to make changes at town hall. Some changes may well be needed, but others rumored to be in the pipeline hint of politics more than improved efficiency.

Town Manager John Salomone is gone. Officially, he resigned, but the truth is that he has been under increasing criticism for the past couple of years, especially from the Republican side of the aisle. His days were numbered when the GOP won the November municipal election.

It didn't help his cause that it was publicly revealed he was seeking employment elsewhere. But who wouldn't do the same if they thought their current job was on shaky ground?

Town managers are like sports coaches. They are hired to be fired. Even football coach Vince Lombardi and baseball manager Casey Stengel, two of the most legendary sports leaders in history, lost their jobs after years of success because times changed and that success became harder to obtain.

Salomone could have made the council's action uncomfortable by exercising his right to have his departure discussed in open session rather than behind closed doors. He didn't, which is probably just as well, because the outcome would have been the same.

Now there is talk that this is just the first of several steps being considered to replace other town employees. The Democrats are saying it's all about politics and the Republicans are keeping mum, although one GOP council member did criticize a town employee on her Facebook page over the amount of work the town is getting from this person when balanced against the pay he is receiving.

We can only hope that any further steps will be based upon merits, not politics. Newington has a history of rough and tumble political behavior and in recent years that passion has turned into personal attacks against elected and appointed officials, especially in social media.

If a town employee, especially a department head or other person of rank, is not properly performing his or her job, that needs to be rectified. But if that person is being punished for his or her political beliefs, that's wrong.

This is all speculation because the council has not taken any additional steps as yet. It would have been nice if they had said more about why they felt Salomone was no longer fit to serve the town, but their choice was to keep the comments to an official statement, and his choice was to simply move on.

Now it's the job of interim manager Tanya Lane, who also holds the position of town clerk, to negotiate upcoming labor contracts and craft a 2016-2017 municipal budget. We believe she is up to the task and will do a fine job wearing both hats. **NL**

Letter

Rehab staff were holiday angels

To the Editor:

The holiday season every year makes me more aware of angels. This year, especially, the angels I see in store windows, magazines, and lit up on people's lawns bring me a profound sense of peace.

Health issues have and will continue to wreak havoc in my personal life. After having major surgery recently, I went to Bel-Air Manor for rehab. Emotionally, I was in a dark place because my wonderful husband of 54 years has incurable cancer. I really needed to be out and about to see all those angels I so enjoyed.

I started inpatient physical therapy, which is notoriously painful. I continued the therapy on an outpatient basis when I left the facility. At some point, I discovered that those angels I thought I was missing were in the physical therapy department all around me.

There was Chris, the head angel and all the others like Pat, Jose, Maureen, Win (our expert turkey cooker), Jess, Clover – who sings like the angel she is – and Maria, our angel with water wings.

There are many more who should be included here because this includes occupational therapy, speech therapy and the rest of the names I cannot remember.

These people were my angels for all those weeks. I will never forget their professionalism, compassion and how they treated the patients in their care.

– Elaine Boland

newington LIFE

540 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070
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KEITH TURLEY, Publisher

EDITORIAL
Abigail Albair, Executive Editor
aalbair@turleyct.com
Mark Jahne, Editor
Alison Jalbert, Assistant Editor

STAFF WRITERS
Alicia B. Smith, Allie Rivera, Mara Dresner, David Heuschkel, Ted Glanzer, Sloan Brewster

ADVERTISING SALES
Melissa Friedman, Advertising Director
melissa@turleyct.com, 860-978-1345
Lisa Oster-Zippin,
lisa@turleyct.com,860-264-5652

PAGE DESIGNERS
Daniel Kornegay, Cynthia Martel, Robert Sirois

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT
Barbara Ouellette, Production Manager
ads@turleyct.com, 860-264-5523
Maureen LaBier, Production Assistant
Corley Fleming, Cynthia Martel, Kathy Kokoszka, Cindie Cagenello

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

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- May was the warmest with an average temperature of 66.1 degrees (6.6 degrees warmer than normal)
- 18 days featured a temperature 90 degrees or higher (which is only 1 day above the annual average), the hottest temperature was 95 degrees on July 29th
- No tornadoes were reported in Connecticut, and there was no direct impact from any tropical system
- The autumn season (September, October, and November) tied for the 5th warmest on record
- The year was dry, in fact much of the state was classified in a 'moderate' drought with total precipitation at 39.21 inches, which is 6.64 inches below normal
- December goes down as the warmest with an average temperature of 43.3 degrees, an amazing 11.7 degrees above normal... more incredible: it was 4.7 degrees warmer than the previous record of 38.6 degrees in December of 1923!

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